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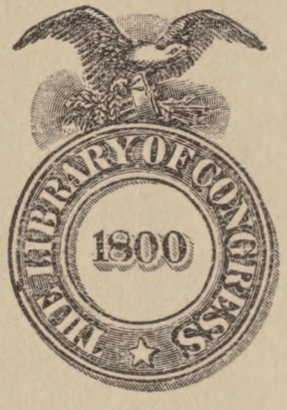

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BY

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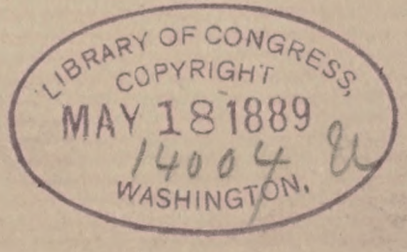
GEORGE HENTY

AND

CHARLES WILLIAMS



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INTRODUCTION.

IT is right that I should say at once how I, Jack Hambleton, came to have undertaken the getting out, or whatever it is called, of these stories. I need not tell any one who knows me that it is not because I like it, but I do it from a sense of justice to myself, as you will see later on. As to the stories themselves, I am not responsible for their being written down correctly. Fortunately I was asleep a good part of the time while they were being told, and I don't remember much that I did hear, and don't want to. My cousin Lucy wrote them down. Why she should have bothered herself to do so is more than any one can well imagine, but I believe myself that she couldn't sleep at the time. She had something on her mind, and that always keeps people awake—at least so I have heard, for I never have anything on my mind—and it ended in her giving me no end of disappointment and annoyance, and in handicapping her chances of happiness in life. However, she did write them down, and I borrowed the book—of course I did not tell her why—and got one of those type-writing women to copy it out, because I think that the question between Lucy and me ought to be set down squarely, for I am sure that any one who comes to read the awful balderdash I had to listen to, will agree with me that no fellow could have looked pleasant over it, and that Lucy was altogether too hard upon me.

One has often heard of men being persecuted by bores. Until lately I have had no experience that way, for naturally if I found a fellow beginning to bore me with his talk, I simply left him to himself, and there was an end of it; but unfortunately there are times when a man can't help himself, and this was what recently happened to me. I was down staying with Sir John Hambleton in the Midlands for a fortnight's hunting. Sir John is my uncle, and it is a pleasant house to stay in. There are generally a good set of people there, and my cousin Lucy is a capital hand at keeping things going, and as nice a girl all round as you want to meet, though I don't always quite understand her, and have a sort of idea sometimes that she is making fun of me, which of course is

absurd when I am eight years older than she is, and expect to get my troop in the Blues before long.

Well, we had been having a pleasant time of it, when on the last day of hunting I came an awful cropper over a wire that a rascally farmer had run along in his fence. I broke my collar-bone, and the brute of a horse, in trying to get up, somehow put his foot on my ankle and damaged it pretty badly, so there I was laid up for a month certain. I didn't so much mind that, for it was rather nice having Lucy fussing about me. Of course the days were rather long, for she could not always be in the study, which had been turned into my special den, and when one had once read the sporting papers there wasn't much to do, for novels bore me horribly, and as to politics I never can make head or tail of them—though of course I agree with my uncle in hating Gladstone, Parnell, and all that lot. However, things would have gone on very well if it hadn't been that three men came to the house. Lucy told me the day before that they were coming, and made rather a mystery about it, and I hate mysteries. She said, "There are three men coming to-morrow, Jack, for a few days, who will enliven your solitude." "Who are they?" I naturally asked. "Never mind who they are, Jack—you will soon find that out for yourself. They will brighten you up wonderfully." Of course I thought that Sir John had done the kind thing, and had asked down two or three men of my own set; and I was above a bit astonished and a trifle put out when next day Lucy brought in three fellows I had never seen before—not young fellows either, but regular old stagers—and said, "This is my cousin, Jack Hambleton, whom I have been telling you about. Jack, these are ——" and then she said three names I had never heard of.

Perhaps fellows who read newspapers might have heard of them, but as I don't bore myself that way I never had, and didn't know them from Adam. One was a big fat chap with a beard, the other two were biggish fellows too. They had moustaches, but no beards or whiskers. One of them had, I soon saw, the remains of a military carriage about him, not our modern style at all, you know, but the sort of thing they fancied the right thing in Dragoon regiments thirty years ago. The third one I couldn't quite make out, but it seemed to me he too had a sort of half-drilled sort of manner about him. It struck me he might have belonged to one of the Irish Militia Corps, or to a West India regiment, or something of that sort.

Lucy left us to ourselves, and I handed them my box of cigars, but they shook their heads and drew out wooden pipes, and making themselves uncommonly comfortable and at home in three of the study arm-chairs by the fire, were soon blowing a cloud of the most detestable tobacco smoke. Of course I had to say something, because I was a sort of host, don't you see. So I asked them if they were down for a little hunting; and would you believe me, not one

of the three cared for hunting. So then after thinking a bit I said, "Ah! then you have come down for a week among Sir John's long-tails." Then it turned out that none of the fellows cared much for shooting. Well, after that there was an end of it as far as I was concerned, except that I asked who they fancied for next year's Derby; and you will hardly conceive it possible, but it is a fact that not one of them knew the name of a horse that was in the running!

After that I didn't say any more. What was a fellow to talk about with men who didn't hunt or shoot, and were so beastly ignorant that they didn't know the name of the favourite for the Derby? So they began to talk to each other, and I listened and wondered who on earth they could be. I have come across some scientific professor-chaps who know nothing except about stars or fishes or those cholera things that go floating about in the air, but these didn't look like that sort of thing. None of the three was bald or wore spectacles or anything of that sort. They soon got into all sorts of arguments. I never saw such chaps for contradicting each other; as soon as one said a thing another jumped down his throat. The rummest affair was the things they talked about. First of all they had a tremendous jaw over the distance from Peshawar to the head of the Khyber Pass. They all seemed to know every foot of the way, and the crackjaw names of all the places on the road, and they went on at it till I wished they were all those what-do-you-call-'em chaps one reads of, who make a point of going from one place to another, rolling over in the dust or working along like a caterpillar or something of that sort, and had to go the whole distance. Then one of them happened to say something about Egypt, and the others were down upon him at once, and they went at it tooth and nail; then they jumped to America, and squabbled over some chaps they called Molly something or other, who, as far as I could make out, worked in mines, and passed their odd time in cutting each other's throats. Then they got back to Europe, and there wasn't a country nor, as far as I could see, a village that they did not pretend to know all about. I came to the conclusion at last that they were either the biggest liars that ever lived, or some of those Geographical Society fellows who I have heard get things up from maps and then pretend to know a lot more about them than people who have been living there for years.

Sometimes I noticed one of them pretended to have been to some place that the other fellows didn't know enough to lie about, and then they sat quiet and listened as if they really thought he was saying something worth hearing. One fellow talked like a book about Armenia, and then another had his innings about the Cape, and then the fat man laid down the law about Abyssinia and Ashanti, and had a turn about the Crimea into the bargain. At one time I thought my uncle, who is an awfully good-hearted fellow, must have invited three lunatics down for a change from

Hanwell or some of those places where they keep madmen, only I thought he would hardly have done that with Lucy in the house. Then I remembered that when I was at Eton some chap who was always reading books told me a story out of one of Lever's novels about a fellow who went to a dinner where there were a lot of couriers, and thought for a time he had fallen among lunatics. Still these men didn't look like couriers; besides, even Lucy would hardly play such a trick on me as to introduce couriers to me. I couldn't think of anything else; thinking makes my head ache at the best of times, and when a man has got a broken collar-bone and a damaged ankle he can't be expected to bother himself. So I listened until my head was in a whirl, and then I fell asleep and dreamt I had somehow got into a water-mill, and that the machinery was working away all round me. I should think that I must have slept an hour and a half, and I suppose those fellows must have been at it the whole time; anyhow, when I woke they were just getting up from their chairs and going out, they said, for an hour's turn, to give them an appetite for dinner.

From that time all peace and quietude were gone. One or other of those fellows was for ever coming in, sometimes all of them together, and telling me the most awfully prosy yarns. I really believe they meant well, and thought they were amusing me, instead of driving me almost mad with their talk. The worst of it was, Lucy seemed to like it, or at least she pretended to like it, for no one could really have cared about listening to their long-winded stories. Anyhow, she would come in and sit sometimes and listen to them as if she were in the stalls of a theatre. How she did it I don't know; and if I yawned—and I couldn't help it sometimes, she would frown at me as if I was committing some horrid kind of offence. It was only occasionally I got her alone now. Before, she used to be wonderfully nice, and I really had begun to think that Lucy would make an awfully good sort of wife, and that I should tell her so some day; but now she seemed in such a restless sort of mood, there was no talking seriously to her. I implored her over and over again to tell me who these men were, but there was no getting anything out of her. "I introduced them to you, Jack," she always said, "and if you are so ignorant that you don't know who they are, I certainly shall not enlighten you."

"I don't so much care about that, Lucy," I urged, "it doesn't matter to me if they are the Emperors of Russia and Germany and Austria in disguise; what I want is for you to keep them away from me, for if this goes on, they will talk me out of my seven senses with their eternal inventions and lies. Now, if they would but make up good stories about a run to hounds, or something about racing, or trainers, or jockeys, or that sort of thing, I could put up with it, that is to say, with a little of it."

"My dear Jack," she said, and she really said it so seriously,

that for a moment I thought she meant it, though of course she didn't, "I never thought you were clever, but I did not think you were quite so stupid as this before," and then she went out and left me to myself. Of course she didn't mean this, still I thought I would try to get to the bottom of it, and so the next time they sauntered in, and one of them began a story, I thought I would really try to find out if there was anything in it, and I listened attentively while he poured out some wearisome balderdash; but it was too great an exertion to keep up long, and I gave it up as a bad job after listening to one or two of their yarns.

I may say at once that the stories here given are but a few of those that I was condemned to listen to, for, of course, it was only those which were told when Lucy happened to be in the room that were put down by her. As to the rest, I am happy to say they have left no impression whatever upon my mind. The following story was the result of something that was said about some one being a zealous officer. Of course I am quite of opinion myself that the fellows who get the name of being zealous officers, are the greatest nuisances in the army. They are the sort of men who can never let well alone; they are always wanting to introduce some new-fangled notion. It is owing to them one is always being obliged to learn new drills. They are always chopping and changing about, not only as to work, but as to all sorts of ridiculous trifles such as the accoutrements you shall wear, and the best way of slinging the men's carbines, and things of that sort, as if it could matter a rap one way or the other. However, this started them, and one of them began a dreary yarn about a man who came from the militia into the cavalry, and who must have been an awful fellow to have in the regiment with you. Of course we do not have fellows like that in the household troops.

Jellypod; alias The Muleteer.

I NEED not say that neither of these was the name by which he appeared in the Army List. The Muleteer was not his original by-name, although there may be a good many people who never knew him by another. When I remember him first—that was about thirty years ago—he was familiarly known in the cavalry regiment he had then recently joined as Jellypod. I knew more of him as Jellypod than I did of him after he came to be known by the other name; but have you never noticed how completely a later by-name supersedes an earlier? I think of him habitually as the Muleteer, and had even to tax my memory to recollect the earlier Jellypod appellation.

He came to the Dung-punchers from a militia regiment. Nowadays the militia are the chartered and approved vestibule to the regular army: and it is quite the thing for a youngster to go straight from the Outlandshire Rurals into the Grenadier Guards or the Blues. But it was a different thing thirty years ago, when the aspiring militiaman had to purchase, and when it was regarded as a mild form of impertinence on his part if he did not creep humbly into some unpretentious high-low regiment. But this man had actually bought into cavalry, and what made his *outre-cuidance* the more marked was that he had come from a London militia regiment. No doubt times are changed, and the salt of the earth do their mimic soldiery in the corps which now swagger as the 10th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers or the 21st battalion of the Rifle Brigade. But thirty years ago the metropolitan and suburban militias were not held in lofty esteem. In a county militia regiment you might lay your account with finding a considerable sprinkling of younger sons of the territorial families, and probably the major would be a man who had served in the regulars, and had gone in for the local corps when he married and retired to settle down on his patrimonial estate. But the London regiments had not this stamp of officerhood. As like as not the Colonel Commandant would be a soap-boiler engaged in the active duties of his odoriferous profession. You would find no doubt ex-regulars holding commissions, but they were rather of the copper captain variety, who bound their militia commissions as phylacteries on their

foreheads in evidence that their claim to the title of officer and gentleman was unimpaired by the little cloud under which they had retired from more active service. A militia commission has always been more or less of a useful item of stock in trade to a man living by his wits; and gentlemen of this type were sandwiched freely in the old days in the London regiments between the dashing scions of aldermen and the *jeunesse dorée* of the Stock Exchange.

Jellypod was a good sort of fellow in his way, but he did not hit it off with the Dung-punchers. For one thing he was a married man with two children. Now in the matter of matrimony among the officers, the Dung-punchers might have belonged to the army of the late lamented Cetewayo. Old Guardlex the colonel—he had been chief ever since the Crimea, and it was currently believed that he had sworn to live to a hundred and to die in the command of the Dung-punchers, resolutely refusing promotion—old Colonel Guardlex had laid down the rule that no officer should marry and remain in the regiment who was not at least half way up among the captains. A junior captain might wed, although frowned upon, on giving his pledge to send in his papers within the year; but lo! here was a cornet joining, not only with a wife, but with a wife who was a foreigner, and there was the additional aggravation of brats.

Then Jellypod, subsequently the Muleteer, had a modest confidence in himself. Among his burglars and pickpockets he had learnt foot drill thoroughly, and the first time he turned out to recruits' drill in the barrack square, had affably set the "regimental" right in regard to a word of command. He had studied Jomini, had detected the superficiality of Hamley's "Operations of War," and had visited scientifically the battlefields of 1859 in Northern Italy. He had not been in the Dung-punchers a week before he had tendered every officer a printed copy of an (undelivered) lecture before the United Service Institution on the utility of cavalry as a support to infantry. Before a fortnight was over he had confided to the adjutant, who—of course I mean the fine old ranker adjutant—was always very friendly and confidential with newly joined officers, that he regarded the regimental system of the Dung-punchers as reprehensibly slack; and that he thought every one under the rank of field-officer, should invariably attend morning and evening stables. One fine day after luncheon he followed the chief into the anteroom and asked him whether he would have any objections to a project he (Jellypod) had conceived, that he should give a course of evening lectures in the garrison library to the noncommissioned officers of the regiment on the German cavalry method of working by "fours." Old Guardlex stared at him grimly from under his shaggy eyebrows for the space of about a minute, deliberately expectorated into the grate, then rose, and without a word, stalked out of the room. Jellypod did not win much favour from

the fat old quartermaster, when he suggested to that worthy that the regimental meat should be cast every morning, until the contractor realized that the second class beef he was in the practice of sending in would no longer be accepted.

With all the good will in the world, Jellypod did not stand well in the eyes of the men of the troop to which he was posted as cornet. He began badly. As is usual when a new officer's furniture arrives, a squad of men under a corporal were detailed to unload the Jellypod furniture from the vans in which it had come down from town. The work done—you may be sure the fellows had some chaff among themselves about the cradle, which presented to them a strange anomaly in being part of a cornet's goods and chattels—the oldest soldier, as the custom is, formed up to Jellypod, and saluting, intimated the anxiety of himself and his comrades to drink that officer's health. Jellypod wasn't a bit mean, but he regarded this attempt to "pike" him as an impertinence, and ordered the man about his business, threatening to report him. He did report him to the corporal, who told him bluntly he thought the "kick" quite natural—the work being outside the men's regular duty, and it being an invariable custom to reward a fatigue party, on this kind of service, with the price of a drink round. In fact the honest corporal as good as hinted that he himself felt rather dry. But Jellypod stood on the principle of the thing, and refused to contribute toward the consumption of intoxicating fluids; he himself was a teetotaler. It was a high sense of principle again which impelled him to refuse to fall in with the immemorial practice of paying his footing the first time he entered the riding-school. He would have stood out even against the fee to the riding-master, taking the ground that among the duties for which he drew his pay was the instruction in equitation of the officer-recruit as well as of the soldier-recruit; but old Voyage had taken his grievance to the colonel, who curtly ordered Jellypod not to let him hear any more "of this d—d nonsense." But he stood out against the *dustoor* to the underlings of the riding-school. Then the grim old rough-riding sergeant swore a grizzly oath, and took the corporal and the rough-riders to witness, that if Mr. Jellypod did not rue his meanness before he was dismissed riding-drill, then his name was not old Bob Swash. And in truth it was a bad morning's work for Jellypod when he declined to fork out that sovereign as he trod the tan for the first time; for it came to pass that he and that same tan became and remained exceptionally intimate.

The universal wonder was why Jellypod should have come into cavalry. He was a fine-looking, florid man of some seven and twenty, with a full round face, encircled by long chestnut whiskers. He was straight and square-shouldered, but had already begun to run into flesh, exhibiting a considerable protuberance in front, whence his by-name; and in point of fact exhibiting the reverse of attenuation when taken in reverse. With his round fleshy thighs,

he looked just the sort of man to have a washball style of seat in any position, and bound to endure much in the effort to obtain the correct cavalry seat of the period, then much longer and less easy to acquire than now.

The Dung-punchers hunted to a man: they would have hunted every day of the week, including Sunday, if their studs had run to it, and if there had been a sufficiency of attainable meets. The chief was the keenest of any; the prime article of his simple faith was that so long as unfortunately there was no fighting to be done, the chief end of the cavalryman was to gallop after hounds. So, the day Jellypod came to the regiment, the chief, never dreaming that there was any need to ask him whether he hunted, simply put the question, "How many hunters are you bringing; how many days a week do you care to hunt?" You might have knocked him down with a feather—he was stricken absolutely dumb, when Jellypod, in the most matter-of-fact way replied,—

"I am bringing no hunters, sir. I don't think hunting is an amusement I should care about. The fact is, I really don't know how to ride. I don't believe I was ever on the outside of a horse in my life. Of course I must learn now that I am in a cavalry regiment; and I daresay I shall find no difficulty in purchasing a steady, docile charger."

When he joined he had bought the first charger of the officer whose retirement created the vacancy which made room for him, a perfect broken thoroughbred old chestnut, cunning in riding-school drill, knowing every command as if it had studied the book of the *manège*. This was a great pull for Jellypod; if only he could have kept in the saddle, the gallant old horse would have kept him right. But with "stirrups up" he couldn't keep in the saddle had his life depended on doing so. At a walk he was all right; but as soon as the word "Trot!" was given, he was all over the place. If he hung on by his eyelids for a round or two, old Swash, the non-payment of footing rankling in his mind, would touch up the old chestnut with the long whip; and then Jellypod would shut his eyes and gently roll off the saddle on to the tan. The man, however, had both pluck and perseverance. He never did get his seat without stirrups, but when these were allowed to the ride, he did better; trusting to them and to the bridoon to an unjustifiable extent, and rolling about, as old Swash used to say, "like an apple in a bucket"—only the expression was mostly a good deal coarser; but coming to grief altogether with much greater rarity. To the last he was the most abject duffer at "heads and posts," and it was well that the old chestnut carried a good head, else every time he and his rider went over the bar, the latter would have shot bodily over the former's ears. Altogether, Jellypod had a good six months in the school before he was dismissed riding-drill, and then it was only because, as the riding-master said, he could not be bothered with him any longer.

Jellypod had developed into considerable of a martinet even before he ceased to be a recruit and blossomed forth as a "duty soldier." There was not an officer in the regiment who had so keen an eye for specks of rust in that awkward cranny at the back of a big bit, as it hung with specious resplendency between the burnished stirrup-irons. Trouble was no object to Jellypod in his quest after evidences of the dragoon's perfunctoriness. He was the first officer in the British Cavalry—ex-rankers in a bad temper excepted—to unfasten a buckle in order to ascertain whether that recondite crevice at the root of the tongue was free from rust. The men of his troop rejoiced to see him cured of the practice of searching for scurf in the tails of horses shown out to be passed as clean, by a kick on the knee which he received from Tom Maguire's vicious chestnut mare. With all this bustle of thoroughness, Jellypod had no intention of posing as a tartar; he was simply full of exuberant zeal to do his duty to the extremest tittle. But he got himself all the same, heartily disliked and a good deal despised. You see he was in such a hurry to be critical that he had not always acquainted himself with the right names of things. The whole stable burst into a roar of involuntary laughter once, when he spoke of a crupper as a "breeching;" and he "mulled it" severely on another occasion when he spoke of a horse's "left foot."

He was such a glutton for work that he was always ready to take "the belt" for another officer; I have known him orderly officer for a week on end, and he performed the duties of the "orderly" function in the most thorough manner. He would "take the guard" twice in the course of a night, and never omitted to make the round of the sentries with the serjeant. So full of zeal was he that when living for awhile in barracks during the absence of his wife at the seaside, he began the reprehensible practice of sneaking stealthily round the posts in order to detect any sentry who might be indulging in a few winks. He found it advisable, however, speedily to desist from this species of enterprise, because of an unpleasant experience he met with. Approaching a sentry, he had bidden him "give up his orders." Now the orders to sentries are that they are to give up their orders to nobody unless accompanied by the non-commissioned officer of the guard; and the sentry refused. Jellypod, bent on testing the soldier's knowledge of and fidelity to his orders, announced himself an officer and repeated his demand. The soldier recognized him, and saw his way to make reprisals on this man who pried by day into the tongues of buckles, and by night went on the prowl to trip up sentries.

"Here," exclaimed the sentry, "I don't care who you are; officer or no officer, you have no business comin' molestin' me in my post, an' tryin' to make me commit myself by givin' up my orders. Into the sentry-box with you, or I'll fell you with my carbine. Jump lively, or I'll brain you!"

Jellypod was not a hero, and it was clear to him that the man was in earnest and his monkey up. Severely crestfallen, he got into the sentry-box, and then begged of the sentry to summon the serjeant of the guard.

"See you d—d first," said the soldier, "you ain't 'fire,' so I've no call to give 'immediate alarm.' You'll stop there and cool till the relief comes round, and that will be in about an hour and a half."

There was no help for it, Jellypod had to dree his weird. When the serjeant came with the relief, he wanted the sentry made a prisoner of for insubordination and threatening violence to his superior officer; but the serjeant refused, saying he considered the man had acted within his duty. He put the occurrence into his report; and next forenoon Jellypod was sent for to the orderly room, and had the opportunity of realizing with what emphasis and fertility of invective old Guardlex could administer a wigging. He never skirmished around any more among the night sentries, and for at least a week desisted from screwing his eyeglass into the crevices of big bits and turning buckles inside out. The chief was always down on him, but worse than ever after this episode. Two days after it, out at squadron drill, he told him he rode like a cross between a tailor and a sack, and sent him back to riding-school till further orders.

The truth was that the chief was most anxious to see the back of Jellypod, and the aspiration was shared in by every officer in the regiment. He was not detested; it was recognized that there was nothing of the actual cad about him; but the feeling was intense that he was the wrong man in the wrong place as an officer in the easy old confraternal Dung-punchers, who did not believe in new-fangled notions, and who, as regards most of their professional ways, had moved very little since they charged in the Union Brigade at Waterloo. Colonel Guardlex was a just man, and under no temptation would he resort to tyranny, or allow his officers to indulge in hazing; but he was not backward in administering strong hints to Jellypod that he was not in his proper sphere as a cornet in the Dung-punchers. As soon as that subaltern was dismissed from riding-school, it became imperative that he should provide himself with a second charger—indeed he ought to have done so earlier. Beast after beast was sent him on approval, any of which he thought quite good enough, and it is true that any of them was good enough for the price which was Jellypod's figure. But the right vests in the colonel of a cavalry regiment to pass or reject horses intended for officers' chargers; and Guardlex ruthlessly cast candidate after candidate for the position of Jellypod's second charger. At last he was told he must get a second charger, and no more nonsense; Jellypod piteously urged that it was the colonel who was standing in the way of his possessing that requisite animal.

While matters stood thus, the Dung-punchers got the route. I should have said they had been in Newbridge for a couple of years, and now they were ordered to Birmingham, Coventry and Weedon. Jellypod's troop was in the detachment assigned to Weedon under the command of the major. Jellypod, whose first charger was lame, went by train into Dublin, where the detachment spent the night before embarkation. Next morning he appeared in complete marching order, on the back of a big underbred young horse, as soft as butter, for it was just off the grass, and with quarters as round—well as Jellypod's own. The beast fretted itself into a lather on the march down to the North wall, where, to the dismay of Jellypod, Colonel Guardlex was very much in evidence to see the detachment duly off. The chief no sooner caught sight of Jellypod's mount, than he denounced it as a cross between a cow and a camel, and cast it on the spot, so Jellypod crossed St. George's Channel a cavalry officer on the line of march without a horse to his name.

He was the only subaltern with his troop, and it was thought by the major and his captain imperative that he should go on the road. The only resource was to dismount one of the men, and put Jellypod on the troop-horse. There was a good deal of malice in the selection of the quadruped. Throughout the regiment "G. 11" had a malign reputation for unapproachable roughness. She was the sole survivor of the hard Crimean winter, and the tradition was that she had been there frozen solid, and had never again quite thawed. She was satirically known as "the Bone-setter," and was understood to have dislocated every articulation in the framework of one recruit, and jerked the teeth out of the head of another. This was the mount which on the Liverpool jetty was given to Jellypod, to carry him for nine long marches till Weedon should be reached.

"G. 11" was a pleasant horse at a walk, and not at all a bad-looking beast in the summer time when her coat was glossy. Jellypod clearly rather fancied himself as he paced up Compton Street under the eyes of the shop-girls. As soon as the town was cleared, the trumpet sounded "Trot!" and his self-complacency rapidly disappeared. Apart from her roughness, "G. 11" was a hot old jade, and stiffly plunged and bucked as she fought against the officer's heavy hands tugging and jerking at the curb as he rolled and floundered all over the saddle, while the perspiration streamed from under his helmet. One need not dwell on the agonies of that march: suffice it to say that when Cornet Jellypod woodenly dismounted in front of the Grosvenor Hotel in the ancient city of Chester, the world has seldom contained a more saddle-sick man. As soon as saddles were removed, information came from the stable that the day's work had given "G. 11" a sore back, and that it was impossible that she could be ridden during the rest of the march.

Jellypod felt very like intimating that it was impossible that he

could ride during the rest of the march. But he was of a resolute spirit, and first arnica and afterwards cunningly moistened pipe-clay judiciously applied had improved matters by next morning. A second trooper was dismounted, upon whose horse Jellypod performed the second day's march to Market Drayton. The paces of this beast were suave and easy compared with those of the "Bonesetter," but Jellypod rolled about so in the saddle in the effort to favour his chafes, that when the day's march was over mount No. 2 was reported to have a sore back. It was then that the captain, previously only grumpy, permitted himself the use of the strongest language in addressing the unfortunate Jellypod. This captain was known in the regiment by the pleasing appellation of "Hellfire Jack," on account of the fervour of his objurgations when the spirit moved him. On this occasion the spirit moved him very much indeed, and rendered his remarks wholly unquotable. Suffice it to say, that he swore Jellypod should have no further opportunity of bedevilling troop horses; but should be compelled to tramp on foot the rest of the way to Weedon, leading the two beasts which he had used up in as many days. This was a *brutum fulmen;* no doubt the captain would have been glad to carry out his threat; but the major pointed out that it would not do. So Jellypod was permitted to finish the journey by train, and his abrasions were all but whole by the time the detachment rode up the slope by the military prison, and defiled through the fine old gateway of wrought iron that leads into the Weedon barrack-yard.

A few months later the Dung-punchers quitted the midland stations, and were concentrated in the lines at the Queen's Hotel end of Aldershot north camp. A very brief experience of the Long Valley sufficed for Jellypod. He had not nerve enough for a troop leader in a charge over its broken and dust-smothered surface. One day he pulled his horse back on to him in a half-hearted attempt to jump one of the little cuts which the rain storms wash out in the friable black dust, and as he lay prone in the V-shaped trough of it, a couple of squadrons rode over him. Next day he opened negotiations for an exchange to India, and presently he was gazetted to one of the ex-Company's hussar regiments.

Jellypod appeared to thrive in India. He had got his lieutenancy before his exchange, and some two or three years later an opportune snap of cholera made a captain of him. But his great chance came when Sir Robert Napier set himself to organize that Abyssinian expedition which brought him his fairly earned peerage. Jellypod—I ought to say here that I believe the familiar old Dung-puncher name did not follow him to India—had the luck to get a special service billet. It did not promise much glory, since its function was the command of the mule transport train of one of the divisions, but he was thankful for minor mercies and accepted it with avidity. Now as a beast of burden the mule has

its idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, which, it is averred with considerable show of authority, no white man has ever fully comprehended. If this be indeed so, our friend was the exception that proves the rule. He seemed to have a natural affinity with mules, and could do anything with them he pleased. No Alabama nigger ever had a closer *rapprochement* with the mule than had this gallant officer; and it was the universal recognition of this accomplishment that earned for him the *sobriquet* of "the Muleteer," by which hereafter I shall denominate him.

He was zeal itself. Staveley somewhat roughly sat on his project of giving evening lectures on the sandy beach of Annesley Bay to the Smitches, Rock Scorpions, Cypriotes, Syrians, Fellaheen and other miscellaneous scum of the Levant who were serving as mule-drivers, on the expediency of the construction of a common language to be used in addressing the mules in their charge. I have reason to believe that the story was a "shave," that he sent in a memorial to Sir Robert Napier, suggesting that a number of mules of both sexes should be left behind in the Abyssinian villages, with intent that a stock of transport animals should be thus propagated. But he certainly was a most zealous and active transport officer. It is reported of him that on one day he personally flogged upwards of three hundred mules up the steep slope on the landward side of Zula. Had there been any fighting in the Abyssinian expedition—it is really the case I believe that one man was killed—he of course would have been out of it in the rear among the baggage. But he was no greater distance off the final amusement than the south side of the Bashilo; he was mentioned in despatches, as is the modern fashion in regard to every one above the rank of lance-corporal; the Director of Transport strongly recommended him for "extent and value of assistance," and the Muleteer looked forward with a modest confidence to a brevet majority, and thought it not unlikely that he would get the C.B. as well. The Muleteer had the happy fortune to live, not in the bad old days, but in the good new days. In the bad old days, the only service that assured to a man a brevet—if he came out alive—was to lead a forlorn hope. Then, an officer might own a carcase as full of holes as a cullender, and never have the impertinence to dream of a brevet. The Napier brothers, for instance, got pretty well shot to pieces in the Peninsular war; Charles was a major at Vimiera in 1808. He was still a major after Fuentes d'Onoro in 1811, never having missed a battle, and having been wounded six times. George got his captaincy in 1804, he was all through the Peninsular fighting, from Corunna to Toulouse, in which battle, fought in 1814, he was but a substantive major, having in the interval lost an arm and been wounded otherwise repeatedly. Henry Havelock soldiered twenty-nine years before he obtained the rank of a field-officer. The officer of these brighter days lives under a régime the virtual

head of which was a full major-general in sixteen years after he got his first commission. Nowadays, every staff officer who has been within sound of a skirmish, the wind blowing his way, gets his brevet as a matter of course. There is a fortunate young gentleman in the service to-day (he is in "the ring," of course) who has three medals for as many campaigns, the C.B., the Khedive's Octopus, and the Osmanlie, who has been the recipical of two steps in rank by brevet, and who has never seen a shot fired in anger.

Well, the muleteer was earning his Abyssinian laurels a few years before "the ring" became the pride and ornament of the British army, else, supposing him to have been of the elect, he no doubt would have got the C.B. As it was, he got a brevet majority, and when the expedition returned to India, he said farewell to regimental duty and got a billet on the staff; and such was his good fortune, that for some ten years he continued to hold staff appointments with perfect satisfaction to himself, and with no perceptible detriment to the interests of the service. Being on the Madras side, he gradually fell into the easy-going fashion of the "benighted Presidency;" no doubt his zeal had not departed from him, but it had fallen latent. His portliness had increased with years and ease, and it was only once in a blue moon that he was seen in the saddle. A second brevet had come his way in some inexplicable fashion, and he was now for some time past a lieutenant-colonel. But his substantive rank still remained that of captain, and as his original Indian regiment had gone home and he had exchanged into its successor, so as to keep on in his staff billet, he was regimentally a very junior captain. But this gave him no disquietude, since nothing was further from his intention than to revert to regimental duty.

I don't quite know how it happened, but in negotiating a second exchange so as to keep his staff berth, he somehow missed stays; found himself all at once on half-pay, and no longer in staff employ. The story was that he was manœuvred out of the brigade majorship, or whatever it was he held, by an intrigue at Presidency headquarters, where the post he had been occupying was wanted for somebody else. Anyhow, the poor Muleteer had no alternative but to return to England. He came back very disconsolately, and tried in vain for some staff employment. He would have left the service altogether, if he could have found anything to do worth his while in civilian life, but nothing offered. He thought himself too poor to scratch along on half-pay, and made interest for reinstatement to full pay and duty. His substantive rank being still that of captain merely, he could of course aspire to no higher regimental position; and one fine day he was gazetted to a troop in the old familiar Dung-punchers. Of course he came in as junior captain. Certainly as a junior captain he was a good deal of an anachronism, for he was a grandfather he weighed sixteen stone, there was a deep tinge

of grey now in the chestnut whiskers, and he was senior in the army to the commanding officer of the regiment. But now in the Dung-punchers, he met with a good deal of consideration. Most of the old hands who remembered him in his cockolorum days, were now out of the regiment. Old Guardlex was by this time a lieutenant-general; the major had gone into brewing; the adjutant was drilling a yeomanry corps; and the quartermaster had retired on his plunder.

The regular drill season was over, and the Dung-punchers had come from Brighton to Aldershot, exchanging with a regiment that had borne the heat and burden of the summer in flying columns and Long Valley field-days. So it seemed that the Muleteer had at all events a quiet winter in front of him, before the season should come round when he should have to encounter the chances of the Long Valley, the pitfalls of the Fox Hills, and the grips and fissures of the Devil's Jumps. But it happened that early in October a continental cavalry officer of distinction visited England, and orders came down from Pall Mall for a field-day of the Aldershot cavalry brigade in honour of the stranger. The general commanding the brigade was away on leave, shooting grouse in Scotland. The three regiments paraded, and lo! the junior captain of the Dung-punchers, senior as he was in army rank to any other officer on the ground, quitted his subsidiary position of squadron leader in the Dung-punchers, rode out to the front, and assumed command of the brigade.

It must quite frankly be allowed that he made a deuce of a mess of it. The Duke addressed him in those bland phrases and mild tones which are so characteristic of the head of the British army when things do not go smoothly. The Muleteer, for his part, lost his temper as well as his head, and pitched vehemently into his own regiment, denouncing it for all sorts of faults and shortcomings. The lieutenant-colonel commanding it bore his expletives with a grim submissive silence, biding his time. At length, the Duke and the Muleteer both equally hoarse, the distinguished stranger fluent in encomia while an amused smile played over his features, the field-day came to an end. The Muleteer ceased from his temporary pride of place as acting brigadier-general, and reverted to his position as junior captain of the Dung-punchers; and that honest old corps stolidly returned to barracks. No sooner had the men dismounted than "officers' call" was sounded. The officers, still with the grime of the Long Valley on their faces, crowded into the orderly-room, where they found the chief already seated in his chair, with that look in his face which it wore when he was not amiable. He directed the Muleteer to come to the front, and thus addressed him,—

"When in command of the brigade to-day, you used, sir, a considerable variety of forcible expressions, in the denunciation of the regiment which I have the honour to command. To some extent,

I am prepared to admit the force of your strictures, although it might be the opinion of an impartial critic, that the fault did not wholly lie with the regiment. The squadron of which your troop, sir, was a part, was the chief sinner in slackness and blundering. You will, sir, till further orders, take that squadron out into the Long Valley for drill every morning, from nine to eleven. And, sir, I observed to-day that your seat on horseback was excessively bad, and that when your charger knocked about a bit, you were all over the place. You will, therefore, until further orders, go to riding-school every morning, from seven to eight, along with the junior class of recruits. That is all I wished to say. Good morning, gentlemen."

The same afternoon the muleteer sent in his papers, and next morning he went away on leave, pending his retirement from the service. I believe he is now living in the Poictiers district, engaged in the occupation of breeding mules.

Well, the ending of that story was satisfactory any how, though it was such a fearfully long time coming. I have heard of fellows pretty nearly as bad as that, and the wonder is that the colonel did not make him send in his papers on the day after he joined. I remember a fellow dining at our mess and saying that his major gave lectures about things, and all the fellows had to attend. The general opinion was that the service was going to the dogs, and that it was not worth living if this sort of thing was to go on.

The three men fell to discussing the story the cavalryman member of the trio had just told. It was thus that the Irish fencible-looking fellow expressed himself: "Of course that case you have been giving us was one of zeal where there was nothing behind it, The man was a fool, but even when zeal shows itself in good service it does not always pay. I know of a case in which a man did splendid service out of pure zeal, and instead of getting any honour or credit for it, he simply got into the black books of the authorities, and in the end it cost him his life. I heard of it from a man who was with Stewart's division at Candahar, he knew all the facts of the case. I jotted it down afterwards in the form of a story, and I think I can tell it to you pretty nearly as I wrote it."

And then he began.

A Relict and a Relic.

AN OFFICER'S WIDOW, having a house larger than she requires, is willing to let a sitting-room, bedroom, bath-room, and bedroom for man-servant, on reasonable terms to a gentleman dining out. Address, Euphemia, 6, Ethelberta Road, West Kensington, W.

LOOKING over my favourite evening paper not long ago, I found this advertisement.

The name Euphemia struck a chord in my memory, but not very distinctly, and I threw myself back, pipe in mouth, into my rocking-chair, to muse on the matter. But nothing came of it. The next morning a letter arrived from an old friend, who had for some time left the service and settled down to bucolic vegetation, saying that he was coming to town for the autumn, and asking if I could recommend him some good apartments for himself and Sandy Martin, his old batman in the 190th, who had followed the colonel into civil life and the shires. Euphemia! The very thing; so, after a series of spasms of suffocation on the Metropolitan Railway, I found myself knocking at the door, and taking stock of a double-fronted villa, near The Cedars, which anybody can find for himself in the Hammersmith Road. Everything looked scrupulously clean and neat. The brass strips to which the bedroom blinds were attached gleamed brightly in the afternoon sun; the knocker was as highly polished; the steps rivalled in whiteness newly driven snow; the Virginia creeper on one side was trained to an inch, and the variegated ivy growing slowly up the other side was carefully tended. The curtains in one window were of fine lace, with an Oriental silk fabric behind them, and in another window were of marone rep with a gold and green stripe. Between these latter curtains stood a large cage of gilt wire, filled with merry little birds, and in front of them was a tiled box, over which fuchsias nodded, and through these the warblers could peep out at the bits of grass which, with a well-rolled walk of grey gravel, lay in front of the abode. The door was opened by a trim little maid, wearing a coquettish cap with cherry ribbons, and dressed in black with a dainty apron of cambric, who made me a curtsey and gave me a smile such as ought to have done on the spot for any 'prentice lad who had a particle of taste. A moment later I found myself in a drawing-room which ran

through the house from front to back, and admiring the good taste that prevailed from the lace curtains away to a conservatory in which a tiny fountain leapt among some gold and silver fishes, that were shaded by a wealth of lovely ferns and exotics.

"There is wealth here, as well as taste," I was saying to myself, and was reaching out my hand towards a closed miniature case, like a triptych, standing on a mantelshelf, when the door opened, and in tripped one of the most charming figures imaginable. The lady was dressed in deepest black, but without that exaggeration of crape which too many young widows nowadays affect as a livery of woe. It was Euphemia, and instantly I knew her. The last time I had seen her was in the station at Multan, when she was bidding good-bye to the husband who was starting on his first campaign. She was then all in white, and smiles brightened her tears as though she saw afar off the hero of her young heart returning covered with glory and decorations, and clasping her to his breast. Now the face was a trifle rounder and more grave, but it had the same calm, ineffable sweetness, the same far-away look in the eyes, the same red and full lips.

"How do you do, Mrs. Scott?" I said.

She visibly started, but answered nothing. I just touched her hand, and told her how I had called about the advertisement; how the name Euphemia had reminded me of something all but forgotten; what was my mission, and who I was. Then she remembered me as a friend of her Frank, and beamed with delight at finding again in the wilderness of London one who had known him for a period all too brief. Within a week from that day my bucolic colonel was installed in the house with his Caledonian valet, and I became a frequent visitor. Colonel Jones, V.C., C.B., C.S.I., married Mrs. Scott within a year, and they have No. 6, Ethelberta Road for their town house, while not very far from where the apple orchards are reflected in the Teme they spend a good part of the year in making themselves and their neighbours happy.

It was while I was casting a fly in his company for some grayling that he told me the story of Frank Scott, of which faint echoes had reached me.

"Of course you know my wife's name is not Euphemia. She only got it as a nick-name when she took a part in some charades at Multan, founded on the tales of Miss Edgeworth or Miss Austen. She looked the part so completely that—you remember the brotherly and sisterly way we had in Indian cantonments—she became Euphemia to everybody. Ah, yes, to be sure, you knew her then. But to me

'Grace is a charming sound,'

and Euphemia is almost forgotten between us. Well, you know

how poor Scott started that November ten years ago in quest of glory and promotion. He was a probationer for the Bengal Staff Corps, and already distinguished as much for his assiduous attention to duty as for his delightful social qualities. He was 'Frank' to everybody, and they tell me he had so gained the hearts of the men, British and native, that he was never saluted without a smile of satisfaction, and he returned the salute as much by his cheery face as by the motion of his hand. Charley Beresford, I think, has the same sort of look.

"Well, he joined at Jacobabad, and was with the first troops to cross the Kachi desert. It was at Dadur that he got his first job. You remember what the Mussulman folks say of Dadur, that 'the Almighty had no reason to make Hades when Dadur existed.' He was made transport officer there for a few days, but he was soon moved up the Bolan. People nowadays speak lightly of the Bolan, forgetting the terrible place it was for troops in '39 and '78 before Temple had made the carriage-road, and of course before the railway. Scott was the first to set himself to make a real road, and he got it into fair order at the rate of two or three miles a day. I think it is thirty times that the road crosses the stream between Dadur and the point at which the river gushes, full-born, out of the living limestone rock three or four miles from the summit. But Frank's work told still better farther on, and it was he who clove a way through the ridge which the first camels had had to climb ere they commenced the descent to the dreadful plain of Dusht-i-Bedaulet or Dirwaza, where, just as camels died forty years before, their carcases strewed the dust, and lay in the ravines poisoning alike air and water. No; history has no lessons for some people. But it had for Scott. Every night, when the column halted, he was on his Kashgar pony, with legs like a four-post bedstead —you know the sort of tireless, shaggy animal—directing the villagers, who were very glad of eight annas a day and a ration of biscuit, in burying the dead beasts, or dragging them far to leeward of the track.

"If every part of the column had had a Scott, there would not have been so much work for the doctors and dispensers. But he had no time to do more than try to make matters a little better than he found them, for he had to push on to Quetta. There he was appointed to accompany the advance, and when the Khojak had been surmounted he was left at the top as one of those to whom fell the task of making a road down to Chaman and so to the plain, or old lake bottom, that, with hardly a break, leads on to Candahar. It was a lonely job. There was a company of Punjab infantry to guard the pass, and I think there was no gun left, for Biddulph, when he found he had no road for his guns, made a slide, you remember, and took them all down that way. Anyhow Scott, burning to get on and take part in the fight that everybody foresaw as a condition precedent to the occupation of Candahar, had to

remain behind and help to get a road made. Disappointed though he was of sharing in the fight, which did not come off after all, Frank set himself with all his energy to road-making, and he got a capital winding track, wide enough for two waggons abreast, made in a very short time.

"But before it was completed, a convoy which had passed on was attacked by a band of villagers from a town lying a little bit off to the left, and it was resolved to utilise the next batch of troops that went up in giving these gentry a lesson, and showing them that theirs was a game at which two could play. Of course with a prospect of something to do, Scott's blood was soon fired, and when the little punitive column set out he was not long in overtaking it. One who was on the Khojak when it returned found officers and men alike talking of the prowess that Scott showed; how he rode down, revolver in one hand and sword in the other, three stalwart tribesmen who came at him with tulwar and shield, while their fellows, with the long Afghan rifles, blazed away at the fearless officer whose Karki uniform was flying in ribbons, but who was himself unhurt, save for a very slight cut in one shoulder. Punjabi or 60th, native officer or British officer, everybody was singing the praises of Frank Scott. When the column had burnt the village and seized all the weapons it could find, he went on with his road-making, as if he had not anything better to think about.

"Meanwhile there had arrived on the summit one of those officers who are to be found in every army—a man whose only title to respect is his seniority. He wanted to know how the road was going on. Where was the officer responsible for it? Gone off on a raid, eh? By whose authority? And so on, and so on. Well, you probably anticipate the sequel: in a day or two there came a most formidable set of papers to be filled up. There was no getting over the fact that poor Frank had absented himself; the best thing was to avow it, and let it take its chance. This was done, but at headquarters a very serious view of the matter was held, and Scott was informed that he would not do for the Staff Corps, and that as soon as his services could be dispensed with he would return to his regiment, which was in England or South Africa, or somewhere where it had little chance, as it then seemed, of earning distinction. He was returned to his duty as transport officer, and after a while he was left for "general duty," the most helpless position for a man with his heart in his profession."

"Point de zèle!" I said.

"Just so. He was put on convoy duty across the Kachi or the Pishin flats. His spirit was broken. For what might have won him the V.C. he was deposed and degraded, as it seemed to him. He ceased writing to his wife, save a few formal words not very frequently.

"One day he turned up at Multan, and announced his intention of

going to his regiment at once. He had heard of troubles with the Boers or the Zulus, that he thought would help him to assuage his own. They left from Karrachi, and I think, while he sent Euphemia home, he managed to get transferred to an East Coast steamer at Aden, and so carried on to Natal."

"Yes, and—"

"And he fell at Majuba Hill."

* * * * * *

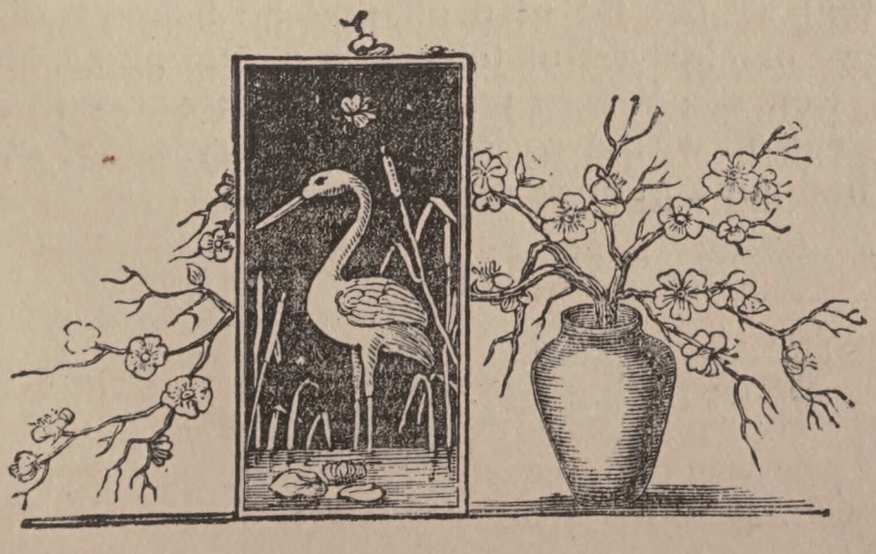
"We don't know a good man when we have got him," I said after an interval.

"Oh, I don't say that. It depends on your general. But that's how poor Frank went off the hooks."

"But, then, how about the house at West Kensington?"

"Well, Euphemia had a little money, not much; but all her friends told her it was a good and growing neighbourhood, where a house was a fortune, and she invested her all in an annuity and in the furniture and lease. She could just live by pinching herself, and she eked out for a while by the embroidery and the painting of which she is such a mistress. But she did not let her rooms. At last you saw the advertisement, which had been many times repeated in a place where nobody would have looked for such a thing, and the evening you found it was the most fortunate in my life."

"Papa! Papa! where is that naughty papa? Oh, you bad old thing," cried a dainty maiden of nine or ten, as she threaded her way among the gnarled apple-trees, and ran into Jones' arms; "where have you been all the morning? I have looked for you everywhere. Why do you and this gentleman keep us waiting for lunch? I beg your pardon, sir; but papa has not introduced me. I'm Francey Scott, please; and I hope you'll not wonder that my papa's name is Jones. I often do."



That evening, while the fellows were smoking their last pipes before going off to roost, they mentioned that next day they were going over, if it were fine, to see some ruins of a castle or something about twelve miles away. I don't know that I was ever more anxious for a fine morning than I was that night, not even when I had a field-day at Aldershot before me, and I could have cried, if I hadn't given up crying a great many years, when my man told me when he came to get me up that it was pouring. After the bed had been carried out and I had got upon the sofa and had breakfast, in they came, and Lucy with them. She really is an awfully good sort of girl, for she had actually brought a bit of work, and had evidently made up her mind that the right thing was for her to sit there and bear it all, and be civil to them till lunch-time. Some people say women are not capable of great deeds, but I don't believe myself that even Joan of Arc, who I believe was a plucky sort of girl, could have devoted herself and looked pleasant over it with a better grace than Lucy did.

Now you would have thought that even three omnibus-drivers, if they had got a nice girl with them, would give up talking shop and try to find some subject that would be amusing to her. I think these fellows did for a time, for they got up all sorts of yarns about balls in every capital in Europe, and all sorts of other places, and I give you my word they even pretended to have had chats with kings and emperors and princes, the Prince of Wales among them, until I really wondered that even Lucy was able to keep her countenance. At last something was said about pretty faces, and that set the fat man off, and he began ; and you will hardly believe me, instead of telling us a tale about some pretty girl he had seen somewhere, which might have been worth listening to, he went off with a cock-and-bull story about some nigger woman he had got a glimpse of.

A Passing Face.

YES, as a rule the faces of people one meets leave but a very passing impression on the mind, unless one gets to know or speak with their owners. One reads, of course, of men who have fallen in love with a face seen but once; but I fancy that sort of love would very soon die out if they did not happen to come across the face again within reasonable time. But I can recall one face of which I caught but a passing glance some twenty years ago, which stamped itself in my memory, and which I can see now almost as plainly and vividly as I saw it then.

A woman's?

Yes. No, not a pretty one; pretty, perhaps, of its kind, but not of a kind that would cause an Englishman to think of it twice. It was a brown face, a light, clear bronze, with black wavy hair drawn tightly upon the head, and, I suppose, as usual, with little plaits behind. She wore a short leathern petticoat and a leathern skin wrapped somehow round her under the arms. She had a necklace of a few cowries round her neck, and one or two bracelets of beads on her wrists.

She was an Abyssinian girl—a semi-savage no doubt; a woman in a land where the women are mere beasts of burden, tilling the ground and carrying the burdens, and toiling and slaving, while the men saunter about with their spears on their shoulders; but a noble specimen of womanhood for all that—a woman capable of as grand an act of self-devotion as was ever performed by one of her white sisters. And I saw all that in a passing glance? Yes, and that is why the face was burned into my memory, and while I think of it, I am filled with admiration and pity and respect. When I tell you how it came about, you will not laugh any more. You will agree with me, that that brown-skinned girl was as noble a creature as God ever made.

We were on our way down from Magdala. Theodore was dead. He was a tyrant and a bloodthirsty one if you like, but for all that, he was a great man, and had he not come in collision with us, it is likely enough that he would have created a great African Empire, and that Abyssinia, instead of the Madhi, would now be master of the Soudan. He was as brave as a lion, and had a

genius for war, as was shown by the way in which he took advantage of our blunder in sending our baggage and ammunition slenderly guarded up a valley where they were out of touch with the main body of the force.

It is true that he did not and could not reckon upon the terrible effect of the breech-loaders in the hands of the two companies of the 4th who formed the baggage-guard, or imagine that these would mow down like grass the flower of his troops whom he despatched to cut them off, while at the same time he sent a numerous body to occupy the attention of our main force. He had enlightened ideas, and was ready to learn what he could from the West, and did his best to get European workmen around him. Had it not been that the shameful blundering of our Foreign Office in allowing a letter he wrote to the Queen to remain for years unanswered, ruffled up his pride and self-respect, he might now be a great potentate, and Abyssinia the greatest power in Africa.

However, he was dead, his mountain fortress a heap of ruins, and one army was on its way back. Not caring to follow its slow marches over ground already traversed, and eager enough to get home after eight months' absence, I pushed on ahead with two or three others equally at liberty to follow their own devices. We had no thought of danger. Had the expedition terminated in failure, doubtless there would have been trouble on the way down; but after crushing the power that had been deemed invincible, there was no fear of hostility on the part of the natives. The only people likely in the smallest degree to interfere with us were the Gallas, the tribesmen of the low-lying country between the mountains and the sea, and near relations of the gallant tribesmen who met us so boldly at El Teb and Tamanieb.

At all times these were troublesome neighbours to the Abyssinians, making occasional raids upon the lofty plateau-lands, and carrying away cattle and women. We had seen them at work round the multitude we had disarmed and sent to their homes when we took Magdala; we had come upon them plundering and ill-treating the helpless fugitives, and had had a sharp brush with them; but as we went on, we heard no more of their doings, and dismissed all thoughts of them from our minds. We passed Antalo, where we had a standing camp, half way down, and had made two more marches. Our rule was that one of us should always be on baggage-guard, while the other two could ride as they liked, starting, perhaps, an hour or two later, or riding on ahead and getting into camp long before the slow procession of the twelve baggage animals. We called it baggage-guard, but there was no idea of guarding it from danger; but if the journey was to be performed in even moderate time, it was absolutely necessary that one of us should remain with the animals.

The baggage was always shifting, for the road was constantly

plunging down deep ravines, and in the descent the saddles would work forward on to the necks of the mules, or in climbing the hills, slip back over their tails. With one of us to get the native drivers at once to work to set things straight, the delay caused was not great, but if they were alone, each of these accidents was an excuse for a long halt. Half an hour would be wasted in angry ejaculation, and as much more spent over a soothing pipe, and the consequence was that the journey would take fully twice as long as it would if one of us was on guard.

It chanced to be my turn. There were two or three pleasant fellows in the camp we had left, and my two companions said that they would breakfast there and overtake us by the time we reached the next camp in the afternoon. The country happened to be more level than usual, and we were getting along well, when some two hours after starting, we came upon a group of a dozen natives, principally women, with three or four laden donkeys. They were evidently in terror about something, and our drivers asked them what was the matter.

They pointed ahead and said "Gallas." I thought the idea absurd—for it was ten days since we had heard anything about these robbers—and prepared to go on, when the natives asked if they might accompany us. Of course I agreed. In another quarter of a mile we approached a village, and from this suddenly rushed out some forty or fifty men, who I saw at once, by the slight difference in their dress from that of the Abyssinians, were really Gallas. It was too late to run away, and we went forward, and in a couple of minutes they surrounded us.

Well, that is no part of the story. I had, as you may imagine, a very bad quarter of an hour of it, surrounded by fellows with levelled guns and threatening spears, and without a soul near save two Portuguese servants who stood pluckily by me, and the cowering native drivers. Well, I got off; the fame of our capture of Magdala and defeat of Theodore had doubtless spread, and for the moment there was a wholesome dread of interfering with Englishmen. Unquestionably that, and that alone, saved my life, and at last I and the mules and baggage, and even the Abyssinians whom I claimed as under my protection, were allowed to pass, though they confiscated the donkeys and the burdens of the latter.

It was almost a miracle, and even to this day I look back upon that encounter with astonishment. That sort of thing takes a lot out of you, and as I rode along in the rear of the baggage, I felt utterly washed out.

Passing through the village, we saw several other bands of Gallas at work; they were driving before them cattle and women, thrashing them with long sticks indiscriminately; but though they passed close by us, they paid no attention to us whatever, considering, no doubt, that their chief, who had been with the party which had

stopped us, had in some way settled with us. A few hundred yards further, a solitary figure came along the road.

It was the girl I spoke of. She was walking fast, and looking straight before her. My men, as she passed, said "Gallas," and pointed back. The natives with them raised their voices in warning, but she did not seem to hear, but came straight towards me. I reined in my horse and again said "Gallas." She gave a little wave of her hand as if to say she knew, and went past me. Her face was set, her lips pressed closely together, her dark eyes looking straight before her. There was an expression that seemed a mixture of horror and determination upon her face. It told its own story : some one she loved had been captured by the "Gallas." It may have been a mother, it may have been a young sister ; but her mind was made up—she was going to share her fate, to submit to a life of slavery among the Gallas, in order to be with her and lighten her lot.

I sat looking after her. Her step never faltered as she went along the track till, just as she got to the brow of a slight rise, four or five hundred yards back, I saw some white-robed figures waving their spears and shouting, run up and close round her. I was nervous and horribly shaken at the time, and I suppose that finished me. I know that as I turned my horse and went on again, I was crying like a child. I have thought of her hundreds of times since, have wondered what her life was, whether her heroic sacrifice met with its reward in her being enabled to comfort the loved one for whose sake she had gone back, or whether one was carried off one way, and the other another, separated never to meet again. I have wondered whether I ought not to have stopped her and to have forcibly detained her for a few hours, so as to give her time to think it over calmly before she carried out her resolve. Anyhow, I have never forgotten the face, nor shall I forget it as long as my memory lasts. It stands out clear and distinct among all the countless faces my eyes have fallen upon.

When the fat man had finished, I was just going to say that I thought the woman had made a great fool of herself, for it wasn't likely she would get with the same master as her mother or sister, or whoever else it was who had been caught, and if she did so, as she would be a slave herself, it wasn't much she could do for the old woman. But Lucy broke out into most ridiculous heroics about the woman, just as if there weren't lots of white girls who sacrifice themselves. Why there was old Jim Hardcastle's daughter; an awfully extravagant old fellow, Jim. He got into an awful mess, with mortgages all over his property, and what did his daughter do but marry the man who lent the money, so as to set things right for her father.

If that wasn't a sacrifice I don't know what was, for I know for certain she was fond of Harry Lucas, though as he was over head and heels in debt himself, of course that wouldn't have been any good. Besides, I don't see that this nigger woman was much worse off after all for going as a slave to these Galla fellows, for Bob Lipscombe, who went out as A.D.C. with Napier, told me that the women did all the hard work, and the men never put a finger to anything. It certainly wasn't worth making all this fuss about; still, as Lucy seemed to think it was very fine, I said so too, though I couldn't help thinking she was only fooling these men on, and wanting to see what lies they would invent next.

"It isn't very often one hears about women doing very courageous things," Lucy said, "and yet I don't see why women should not be as brave as men."

"I think they are every bit as brave," one of the men said. "They are silly about little things; they are frightened at mice, they are mortally afraid of burglars, and I have known girls horribly frightened at a cow; but I think it only is that they are more nervous than men, for when it comes to real danger, they are just as brave. In almost all cases of shipwreck, for instance, we hear that the women behave well, and I know that in Paris, when the bombardment was going on, they used to stand at their doors and knit and talk to each other across the street when the shells were coming down thickly. I remember a story in which a woman gave her life and died without a word or a cry, to save the man she loved, and, curiously enough, she too had a dark skin, though not so dark as that Abyssinian girl's. I'll tell it you, if you don't mind."

Faithful to the Death.

You remember Chisholm, of the — Bengal Cavalry. We met him at Delhi with the Prince, a grand-looking fellow, and as fine a soldier as ever stepped. His regiment was one of the very best that passed the saluting-point at the big review. He is dead now, so there's no harm in telling the story, as I heard it from a man who had been with him through the Mutiny, and who was one of the few who knew what changed him from one of the cheeriest young subalterns in his regiment into a silent and stern-looking soldier.

At the time that the Mutiny broke out, he was serving in a regiment belonging to the Gwalior contingent. There had been, of course, a good deal of talk about the trouble with the greased cartridges, and the mysterious chupatties, and all sorts of whispers about disaffection; but few people thought that anything very serious was likely to come out of it, and fellows went about their work and amusements as usual, drill, and pig-sticking, and shooting, tiffins and dinners. Scindia professed the greatest loyalty, and certainly no one ever suspected that his contingent would take part against us in any trouble that might come.

Some four or five months before the trouble began, Chisholm, who was an enthusiastic sportsman, got news that a tiger had been doing a lot of damage at a village some eight or ten miles away. The weather was tremendously hot at the time, and a good many fellows were away on leave, and, of those with the regiment, some could not get away because of duty, others didn't care about going, so Chisholm started by himself. When he got there, he found the information was correct. Not only had some cattle been killed, but two women had been carried off, one a few days after the other, and there was a regular scare prevailing in the village.

There had been a cow killed that morning, and the natives took him to the spot. The cow had been only partially devoured, and it was pretty certain that the tiger would return that night to finish his meal. Although Chisholm was too real a sportsman to care about getting up into a tree and shooting a tiger in the dark, which is the favourite way of a good many men who are fond of bragging about the number of tigers they have killed, he determined to do so this time because, owing to the shortness of hands for duty, he had to be back again next morning for work, and as the tiger

had taken to woman-killing, it was important that it should be polished off as soon as possible. The nearest tree was about fifty yards off, too far a good deal for a certain shot in the dark ; but Chisholm would not have the carcass dragged closer, for he was afraid the tiger would scent that it had been touched, and refuse to come out of the bushes, of which there was a large clump close by, so he wouldn't let anybody go near the cow.

There was a clear view of it from the tree, and he hung a white cloth on a bush behind it, so that he could be sure of its exact position. When night came on, he took up his post in the tree, with his rifle and a flask of brandy and water, and he had with him a native servant, a man who had been about him for three or four years, and who had been a Shikari in a native village, and could be always relied upon at a pinch to be close to his master's elbow with his second rifle. A fellow of that sort is worth his weight in gold, for nine out of ten of these fellows make a point of bolting as soon as there is any real danger, and, when the second rifle is wanted, they are nowhere to be seen. So Chisholm prized his boy, and the fellow would go through fire and water for him. They sat there talking in low tones for two or three hours, then they heard a roar in the distance, and knew that the tiger was on his feet, and that they might soon expect him. The spot of white could be plainly seen, but they could only just make out the position of the carcass. Not a word was said for half an hour, and then Ramal touched his master's elbow, and whispered,—

"I think he there now, Sahib." Chisholm could see nothing. There was a dark blurr where the carcass lay, but he could not distinguish its outline. Directly afterwards, however, he was conscious of sounds from that direction.

"He is there, Sahib, he is eating," Ramal whispered.

"I think I can make him out just under the white cloth. Well, it's a question of chance, Ramal. I wish now I had got into a bush close at hand, instead of getting up here. I did not think it was going to be so dark as it is. However, it's no use waiting, there will be no moon, and he will probably be off before the first streak of daylight ; I will risk it anyhow."

He took a steady aim at the dark mass in a line with the white spot, and fired. He heard the thud of the ball followed almost instantly by a sharp, snarling roar, then there was a sound of breaking brushwood, and then all was quiet.

"I think you have hit him hard, Sahib, by his roar."

"Well, there is no use our waiting here any longer, Ramal ; he has made off, and will go straight home, I expect. We may as well go back to the village and get three or four hours' sleep. At daybreak we will take up his tracks and see where he has gone to. If he is hit hard, he may not go far, and we may pick him up the first thing ; if he has gone off, I must ride over to be in time for parade, and come out again next day to follow him up."

As soon as it was daybreak, the villagers turned out in force, the tiger was tracked to some distance, spots of blood being found here and there. Ramal declared that the tiger had been hard hit. Its course evidently led to a narrow valley running up into the hills, and this the villagers asserted was his usual lurking-place.

"There is no searching that this morning," Chisholm said, "I have no time to spare now, I shall have to ride fast to be in time to dress for parade."

It was accordingly arranged that some of the villagers should keep watch in the trees near the entrance to the valley that night, and that the young officer should return the first thing in the morning. Leaving Ramal behind him, to make the necessary arrangements, Chisholm at once rode off. The report the next morning was a satisfactory one: the tiger was certainly in the ravine, for he had been heard roaring several times during the night. Chisholm took his place with Ramal at the entrance to the valley. A number of the villagers scattered themselves along its upper edges with gongs, pots and pans, and other noisy instruments, so as to deter the tiger from attempting to ascend the slopes. Twenty men with the dogs of the village went up to the head of the valley to drive it down.

As soon as all was ready, the beat began, and a confused noise of jangling bells, deep-toned gongs, the barking of dogs, and an occasional shout, told those at the mouth of the valley what was going on. Nearer and nearer it came, and Chisholm expected every moment to see the tiger break through the brushwood in front of him. At last the bushes parted, and the first of the beaters appeared—the attempt had been a failure. The tiger had lain close, either in some hidden cave or in a clump of bushes, or had managed to pass unobserved through the line.

"We must try again," the young officer said, "this time we will send the beaters round again to the end of the valley, and you and I, Ramal, with one or two men and the dogs, will work up." Ramal had perfect confidence in his master, and at once agreed to follow him. None of the natives, however, could be persuaded to accompany him, and therefore taking with them five or six of the dogs, they set out alone. For some time nothing could be seen of the trail; Chisholm saw at once that the dogs had been of little use on their way down, and instead of hunting among the bushes, they kept close to his heels, evidently in fear.

"They must smell him strong, Ramal."

"Yes, Sahib, if he has been stopping in this place some time, no doubt they can scent him anywhere. We must look sharp, we know he is wounded, and he may be on us any minute."

With his finger on his trigger, Chisholm made his way gradually up the valley, stopping to search every thick clump of bushes and the piles of fallen rock. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, there was a rustle among the leaves, a vision of a great yellow body in

the air, and before he could turn to fire, he was struck to the ground with tremendous force, his rifle going off as it flew from his hand far among the bushes. Then he heard a sharp cry, and in a moment sprang to his feet. Close to him was Ramal lying on the ground with the tiger over him. The impetus of the spring had been so quick, that the animal had brushed the young officer's side, and alighting at the feet of Ramal, had at once pulled the man down.

Without a moment's hesitation Chisholm drew the kookerie that he carried as a hunting-knife, and struck the tiger a tremendous blow on the neck. With a roar it left its victim, and turned upon its assailant. Chisholm again struck at it, but in an instant he was upon his back with the tiger crunching his shoulder, and tearing his chest with its claws. Suddenly there was the report of a rifle ; Chisholm felt the tiger's grip relax, and it rolled over beside him, just as consciousness left him. When he recovered, he sat up with a great effort and looked round. The tiger was dead, Ramal lay two or three yards away with an arm broken, and the blood streaming from some terrible gashes on his body. The rifle lay across him ; he was insensible.

Wounded as he was, he had evidently rallied his strength sufficiently to throw forward the rifle he carried, and to fire the shot that saved his master's life. Chisholm called to the villagers that the tiger was dead, and then sank back again upon the ground. It was some time before the natives summoned up courage to come down, but at last three or four of the boldest of them ventured, and their shouts that the tiger was really dead brought down the rest of their companions. There was a great talk over the insensible bodies, then two litters of boughs were made, and Ramal and his master placed upon them ; Chisholm opened his eyes as he was being lifted upon it.

"Where are you going to take me," he asked.

"Not far, Sahib, there is a place not far away, where you will be well cared for."

After being carried a distance that seemed to him, lying there with his eyes closed, almost interminable, there was a stop ; then a good deal of talking ; he was carried a little further, and then the litter was laid down. He opened his eyes and looked round. He was in a spacious apartment, evidently a part of a house of some importance. An elderly man was bending over him.

"You are with friends, Sahib, this house and all that is in it are at your disposal ; I have sent off a mounted messenger to fetch the doctor of your regiment." Chisholm was again lifted, carried into a smaller chamber, and laid on a couch ; his clothes, hunting coat and shirt, were cut off him, and his wounds bathed with warm water and a cooling drink given to him, then poultices of bruised leaves were placed on his wounds.

"How is my boy ?" he asked presently.

"He is badly hurt, Sahib, worse than you are, but he may recover."

In a little over two hours, the regimental surgeon and two of his fellow-officers stood by his bedside.

"You are pretty badly hurt, Chisholm," the former said, after examining his wounds, "but I think you will pull round. He has scored your shoulder badly, and you seem generally smashed up there, but if you will lie quiet and be patient, I expect we shall get you all right again in time; these are nasty-looking gashes down your chest, but there's nothing to fear from them. You seem to have fallen into good hands here. The Rajah has been assuring me that they will take every care of you."

"How is Ramal, Doctor?"

"Well I have scarcely looked at him yet; he looks pretty badly hurt, but one can never tell with these natives. Sometimes they pull through injuries that would kill an Englishman, more often they seem to lose heart altogether, and die of wounds that appear almost trifling; however, you had best not worry yourself about him, or anything else at present, but keep absolutely quiet; the great thing we have got to fight against is fever. There isn't much that I can do for you except to bandage your arm in its proper position. As to dressings, I don't think I can do better than leave you in these people's hands. I have found over and over again that these leaf poultices of theirs are better and more cooling than anything we know of. Now we will leave you to yourself; I shall be over again to-morrow to look at you, and I will ask the Rajah to send over at once if he should see fever coming on."

With exhortations to keep up his spirits, and prophecies that he would be soon on duty again, the officers said good-bye, and after the surgeon had seen to Ramal's wounds, and had another talk with the Rajah, they rode off

"Very decent fellow, the Rajah," one of them said. "I don't know that I have ever seen him before. I think I should have noticed him if I had, for he is a good deal fairer than most of them."

"I have heard of him," the surgeon said, "he has white blood in his veins, his father was one of the French adventurers, of which there were at one time so many in India. He entered the service of Scindia, and commanded the artillery in the battle of Maharajpore. He married a native woman and adopted native habits. I believe the reason we have never seen the present man is, that ever since that time, his family have kept up the French traditions and regard us with hatred, so that he never comes to Scindia's court on any occasion when any of our officers will be present. Of course, by this time the trace of French manners is very small, but I imagine, from what I heard, that they pride themselves upon it, regard us as usurpers, and hate us because India is British instead of being French. However, whatever their feelings

may be, the Rajah is evidently disposed to do all he can for Chisholm individually, who is far more likely to do well there than he would be in his own quarters, with the trumpet-calls sounding all day, and the music, and you fellows going in to disturb him every half-hour. Except that it will give me a longish ride every day, I am heartily glad they took him and Ramal there instead of carrying them back to the cantonment."

It was a month before Chisholm was able to be moved to the cantonment. During that time, the Rajah's wife and daughter had nursed him as if he had been one of their own family. Although there was nothing in the house, in its appointments, or in the dress of its inmates that differed in any respect from those of other Mahratta chiefs, the strict seclusion of the women was not practised. Outside the house the ladies of the family were as thickly veiled as other females of the same rank, but, within, they moved freely about unveiled. Father and daughter could both speak a little French, and books in that language in considerable numbers were to be found in the house.

It was therefore only to be expected that, by the time he was well enough to be moved, the lieutenant was deeply in love with his young nurse. The girl was no darker in complexion than a Spaniard, and possessed the soft grace of the Indian woman, tinged with a sparkle and vivacity that came to her from her French ancestor. She had never before spoken to a European, and yet her books had taught her a great deal about European life. She had been taught to hate the English, who had snatched India from France, and had been the constant rival and foe of that country. She had often peeped out from between the curtains of her palanquin, when she went with her mother to make calls upon the ladies of Scindia's Zenana, at the English troops on the Maidan, and had sighed at the thought of the freedom with which, had she been but a French woman, she could have stopped and looked more closely at the conquering soldiers. She had never been near enough to see their faces, and had pictured them as fierce and arrogant men, and as hateful in their ways as terrible in arms.

The first sight of the wounded young Englishman had surprised her. Pale and lifeless as he was, he could be neither fierce nor arrogant; nor was there anything hateful about that face, with its brown wavy hair. It was not wonderful, therefore, that love on her part was as rapid as on his, and that although her mother never left them alone together, they perfectly understood each other. It is so easy to press a hand that gives you a cup; so easy, even in the bestowal of a flower, to indicate that something more is given. Lucille, for the Frenchman had given to his daughter the name of his mother, knew, even while giving her whole heart to the young soldier, that for them the course of true love was not to run smooth. She knew her father's prejudices, and could see that while paying a visit of courtesy every day to the invalid there

was a certain restraint in his manner; she felt that if hospitable to the guest, he was not friendly to the Briton.

The young officer had no such fears; he had been puzzled at first at finding the girl so different from his preconceived notions of Indian women; but this was accounted for when she told him of the Frenchman who had been her grandfather, and how the family had steadily clung to the lessons he taught his children; but of the Rajah's animosity to his race, he knew nothing. He felt that were she dressed in European clothes, he could present her anywhere; already her manners were half European, and with her quickness and tact, she would soon adapt herself to her changed position, while her beauty and grace would make her everywhere admired. As to her religion, she would, of course, in a short time embrace his own.

He hardly looked for opposition on the part of the Rajah. Lucille had two brothers, both officers in Scindia's native body-guard. Girls are thought little of in India, and the Rajah would hardly object to give his daughter to an English officer, especially as the officer was heir to a handsome property at home. After his return to the camp, it was a month before Chisholm was strong enough to mount a horse. His first ride was to the Rajah's. To his disappointment the Rajah received him ceremoniously, and the ladies did not appear. None of the usual honours were omitted, and yet Chisholm felt that the greeting was a cold one, and that the Rajah wished to intimate that although he had been glad to show him every hospitality while wounded, he had no idea of admitting him to any close intimacy, upon the strength of his late stay there.

The next day he wrote a letter to the Rajah, formally asking for Lucille's hand. He stated that his income was large enough to enable him to give her every luxury she had been accustomed to. To his surprise and anger he received a cold and peremptory refusal. The Rajah said that in his opinion the differences of race and religion offered an insurmountable obstacle, in addition to which he himself, descended as he was from a Frenchman, entertained the profoundest objection to any of his family allying themselves in any sort of way with the British. It was not in Chisholm's nature to put up with a repulse where his heart was concerned. Money will do even more in India than anywhere else, and tiny notes in French passed backwards and forwards between the Rajah's Palace and the Cavalry Cantonments. Vows of eternal fidelity were plighted, and although at first Lucille declared that she would never marry without her father's approval, she gradually yielded to her lover's appeals, and came to consent that when the regiment moved from Gwalior, which would probably be in a few months' time, she would fly with him.

He had promised to arrange that she should, on reaching the cantonment, be placed in charge of one of the officers' wives, who

would drive with her in the dress of an ayah, straight on to Agra, where the marriage would be solemnized. The letters now were exchanged at longer intervals, for, seeing that all was arranged, they agreed that it would be better to run as little risk as possible. Then came the first muttering of disaffection; but even when the news came of the first rising at Barrackpore, the officers of the cavalry had no thought of danger for themselves, whatever happened elsewhere. They had no fear of disturbances in Gwalior, for Scindia had hastened to proclaim his strong adherence to the English Raj, and even were the troops disposed to revolt, which no one believed, they would not venture to do so when Scindia could call upon his people to take up arms against them. One day, however, Chisholm received a hurried note from Lucille.

"You must beware, Malcolm; my brothers have been here, and they and my father have been talking much together. I know but little of what was said, but I am sure it means evil. You know my father's sentiments towards the English; he has been quietly collecting arms for some time, and men have been coming in from the country around, and drilling has been going on under men who were serjeants in the contingent. From what I gathered, my brothers say that the contingent will go with their countrymen and then Scindia will be forced either to place himself at their head or will be dethroned. I only heard a few words, but this is what I understood from them. I will write again as soon as I learn anything for certain."

Chisholm took the note across to the Colonel, whom he had already acquainted with his determination to marry Lucille, a determination that the Colonel had done his best to combat, on the ground that these mixed marriages were always a mistake; but then, as Chisholm told him, Lucille was not like an ordinary Indian girl, but in character as in name was already half European.

"I am obliged to you for bringing the note to me," the Colonel said, "and, of course, I will keep my eyes open, and take every precaution; but I cannot but think that the young lady must have misunderstood what she heard. Scindia assures us that the Contingent is absolutely to be relied upon, and that, if necessary, he will himself lead it in the field against the mutineers. The conduct of the men is so far excellent, and I really cannot think there is any cause for alarm. You see she said she only caught a few words, and I think that she must have altogether misunderstood their signification. Still, of course, I will take every precaution."

Weeks went on, the flames spread far and wide through India. News of mutiny and massacre arrived daily, and still all was quiet in Gwalior, and even Malcolm Chisholm came to think that Lucille must have been mistaken.

Then the explosion suddenly came. Or his return from mess to his bungalow, Chisholm's servant told him that there was a woman

waiting to see him, she had a petition to present. Supposing that she had come to beg, Chisholm briefly told the dark figure crouched in the verandah to come inside. He then turned up the lamp burning on the table. To his surprise the woman carefully closed the shutters behind her, and then throwing back the cloth that covered her face, Lucille stood before him.

"Good Heavens," he exclaimed in amazement, "is it you darling?" and for the first time he threw his arms round her and, held her in his embrace. "What brings you here in this disguise?"

"Oh, I am afraid I am too late," she exclaimed, drawing back from him." I have been waiting nearly two hours, and now it is just the time. I came over to warn you, Malcolm. The troops are going to rise this evening. There," she cried, with a sudden start, as the boom of a heavy gun on the rock fortress was heard, "that is the signal—listen."

There was no need to listen. In a moment there was a sudden uproar. Shouts were heard in all directions, and almost instantly musket-shots rang out. Chisholm rushed on to the verandah; he saw a mass of dark figures round the mess-house, while others were rushing across the barrack-yard. A moment later, the Colonel ran out bareheaded, a dozen rifles cracked, and he tottered and fell.

"Save yourself, Malcolm," the girl said. "Another moment and you will be too late." He ran back, and seized his sword and revolver.

"You will come with me, Lucille, I cannot leave you here."

"I have nowhere else to go," she said, placing her hand in his. They ran together from the back of the house, through the shrubbery, and away behind the compound.

"If I had but my horse," Chisholm muttered; but it was useless thinking of it, the stables lay the other side of the mess-house. Fortunately there were bushes and broken ground coming close up to the pailings, and although they heard the shouts of the mutineers in the bungalow before they had got fifty yards away, they felt they were safe for a time.

"You are sure the Contingent have risen too?" he asked, as, after running for some distance, they broke into a walk.

"Quite sure," she said, "I heard it all talked over this morning. I think they suspected that I had been writing to you, they watched me so closely all day, and it was not until just as it got dark that I managed to slip out of the house. Fortunately, as I went, I met my old nurse, and she gave me her things, and took mine away to hide. They missed me very soon, for I heard shouts, and felt sure they were searching for me, and, after I had left the road and made across the fields, I heard horses galloping along towards the town. When I found that you were not in, I did not know what to do. It was terrible sitting there watching the

time go by, and knowing that the signal-gun might fire before you came."

They walked on for hours, and Lucille who had never taken any exercise on foot in all her life, became thoroughly exhausted. She would have still struggled on, but Chisholm, who had felt how heavily she hung on his arm, insisted on stopping. They entered a wood, and as soon as they did so, the girl sank on the ground. Chisholm took off his mess jacket, collected some leaves, and stuffed them inside it, so as to make a pillow, and then put it under her head. But she was almost unconscious of what he did, and the young officer had soon the satisfaction of knowing that she was asleep. The loss of the jacket was no inconvenience to him, for the night was hot and sultry. He went a few steps away, and, leaning against a tree at the edge of the wood, watched until morning.

He saw that their position was almost desperate ; the few who had escaped would be closely searched for, and until beyond the limits of Scindia's dominions, there was no hope of shelter or assistance. It was probable that some other officers of the Contingent might have also escaped, and the cavalry would be sure to be scouring the country for them. But mingled with the thought of the dangers before them, was a sense of joy and exultation that Lucille had risked all to save him, that if he reached shelter, she would be by his side. As soon as it was daylight, he saw small parties of cavalry moving across the country : he went back and touched the sleeping girl.

"Lucille," he said, "you must get up, dear, we must get further into the wood, and hide in some thick clump of underwood ; they are scouring the country for fugitives."

She had woke with a start when he had spoken to her, and he now helped her up.

"I have slept," she said, "oh, and you gave me your coat for a pillow. It was too bad, I would not have had it had I known it."

"I was quite hot enough without it. Now, dear, we must be going at once."

"Oh, I am so stiff," she said, as she made a step forward, "but I shall soon get over it."

Chisholm threw his arm round her and helped her along, until they reached a thick undergrowth, into the centre of which, with some difficulty, he made his way with her.

"Now you had better lie down again, and get a few more hours' sleep."

"Not now," she said "I am thoroughly awake, and the stiffness is gradually going off. Now, Malcolm, have you thought of what you are going to do ?"

"I have been thinking about it all night, but there is nothing to do but to push on—walking at night, and resting in the daytime.

Two nights ought to take us well beyond the frontier, and then we may hope to get aid and shelter in some of the villages. The difficulty is about food ; you can never go another forty-eight hours and travel two nights without food."

"I can go into a village and buy food," she said, "while you remain in shelter."

"I can never allow that," he said, "you might come upon a party of the mutineers anywhere."

"That would be very bad if I were with you," she said, "but they will not know me from any other native woman. I do not think there is any danger ; besides, one need only do it once, for I can buy enough food to last us till we get among friends."

At this moment they heard voices, and a party of troopers rode through the wood within twenty yards of the spot where they were lying concealed, but, fortunately, did not search the bushes. It was not until the afternoon that Malcolm consented to Lucille's going out alone ; he would not have done so then had he not seen that she was suffering much from want of water, and that it was absolutely necessary she should obtain food before she could continue the journey. He would gladly have undertaken the task, however great the danger, but she declared that if he was so headstrong as to go to his death, she would go with him, and he therefore at last consented to her starting alone.

Had he known that his servants had informed the mutineers, when they rushed into the bungalow, that a native woman had been waiting for him there, and that they had escaped together, he would not have let her stir out until after dark, however great had been her sufferings ; but he did not think of this, and believed that she would be able to come and go unquestioned. Two hours later he heard loud talking at no great distance ; he could not distinguish the words, but the tones seemed threatening. He grasped his pistol, and prepared to rush out and die fighting if he heard a woman's voice ; but no scream or cry came to his ears ; the voices were those of men only, presently they ceased. Then he heard men searching the wood ; two or three times they came within a few paces of him, but while the talking was going on, he had climbed a tree that rose in the centre of the undergrowth in hopes of seeing what was going on, and as soon as he saw figures approaching, had taken refuge among the topmost boughs.

For an hour a close search was kept up through the wood, then the mutineers drew off, and all was quiet. It was now growing dusk. He descended the tree and waited for another quarter of an hour, and then, unable to bear the suspense longer, made his way to the edge of the wood in the direction Lucille had taken. He could see no single figure across the stretch of country. He returned to the hiding-place in case she might have entered the wood at some other spot, but she was not there ; he then moved towards the spot where he had heard the voices raised in anger.

As he approached it, he saw something on the ground. With a cry he rushed forward, Lucille lay dead before him, literally hacked to pieces.

There were some troopers in the village she had entered. She made her purchases and started on her return, but after she left, the villager of whom she had bought provisions, remarked to one of his neighbours that she was a stranger, and wondered whence she had come. A trooper overheard him, and told his comrades. They guessed at once that she was either the woman they had heard of, or a native servant of one of the white women who had escaped, and at once mounted and pursued. They overtook her just as she arrived at the wood, told her that they knew that she was with some of the Feringhees, and demanded to be led to their place of concealment; this she absolutely refused to do. They threatened her with death, but she was firm, then they carried out their threat, and killed her. Not a cry escaped her lips, though she received several wounds before a merciful stroke struck her down. She knew that her lover was within hearing, and that a cry would bring him out to his death, and so she stood firm and unshrinking, facing her murderers with almost a smile of triumph that she had saved her lover.

Chisholm took in the story at a glance, although it was not until many months afterwards that we heard the details from the villagers before whom the mutineers had boasted of the deed, while cursing the obstinacy their victim had shown, and marvelling at the silence with which she had met her fate. Chisholm dug a grave with his sword, and laid Lucille to rest, and then started on his way. The journey that would have taken them together two nights, he accomplished before morning, and staggered white, exhausted, and blood-stained into the hut of a peasant; there for days he lay unconscious with fever, nursed by the peasant and his wife.

When he recovered, he made his way down to Cawnpore, and joined Havelock's force there; he fought desperately through the mutiny as one utterly reckless of life, and when the troops met the Gwalior Contingent, Lucille was deeply and bloodily avenged. From that time he was never himself again; he was a fine soldier, no better in the service; but no one ever saw him smile, his heart was in that lonely wood in Gwalior. He never went back to England, never took a day's leave, and seemed to live but for his duty, and his comrades, to whom he was ever ready to do a good action, would have gone through fire and water for their colonel.

"That was grand," Lucy said, clasping her hands; "I don't think it so much that she should have died rather than betray her lover. Any woman worthy of the name would do that, but that she should have died without a cry seems to me wonderful. I don't know why, but it seems almost a part of woman's nature to scream when she is hurt. I don't know why they should, for I do not think men shout out." "I am sorry to say, Miss Hambleton, that men generally adopt another method of relieving their feeling." "How is that?" Lucy asked innocently. "By the copious use of strong language." "I am afraid that is true," Lucy said. "I hope, Jack, you didn't swear when you were hurt the other day." "I have an uneasy recollection that I did, Lucy." "Then it was very wrong, sir, because there could be no relief in using what I have read American girls call 'swear' words." "I really differ from you there," one of the men said; "the mere fact that it is the tendency of men of all nations to use strong language under the influence of sharp pain, would seem to show that it is a safety-valve provided by nature. Can you honestly say, Miss Hambleton, that you have never, when you have hurt yourself or something has gone very wrong, felt that it would be a relief to say something stronger than 'Good gracious'?" Lucy quite coloured up as if she had been actually caught using bad language, but she acknowledged honestly that there were times when she felt that it would be a satisfaction to use male privileges in this respect. Then the talk turned again to soldiers and to the actual love of fighting that animates them. "Men will stand any fatigue and go through anything," one of the fellows said, "if there is a prospect of a fight, and nothing exasperates them more than for an enemy to fall back or open a parley just when they think that the fight is coming on. There is never any illness in a regiment before a fight, and however foot-sore or fever-stricken men will be, they will conceal their trouble rather than run the risk of being left behind. I can recall an instance in Egypt to the point. Here it is."

Zeal in the Ranks.

ALTHOUGH the language in the British Army has not improved since the troops shocked Uncle Toby, in Flanders, I don't think the spirit has suffered abatement. Listen to this little tale of the Nile Expedition.

"'Ot? 'Ot? I believes yer, hit his 'ot," said a cavalry private in a carriage of the line between Boulak and Assiout, in the early autumn of 1884; "why down hat Hel Teb hit was freezin' compared to this. Hat least we 'adn't——cinders comin' hin hand catchin' folks hin the heye—that makes me so 'ot, hi feels like ha Hotterman Turk. Hand has for the dust, atacha!" and then he sneezed.

It was hot, it was dusty, it was grimy, that journey up the Nile. Men who at Cairo had clean faces, at Assiout were like coalheavers. The coal-dust lay thick upon cheeks and brows and hair and clothes.

"Never mind," said one, "we'll make the niggers look white presently. What! is this Ashoot? I thought it was only another halt. Well, God sends relief to the patient!"

And then the 19th Hussars "detrained"—it is not a nice word, but it is official, and perhaps not worse than "entrained." They were a splendid-looking lot of men, rather small, as light cavalry should be; and they looked very "fit," in spite of their dusky hues. The regiment had a bad reputation, once, for slovenliness or absence of smartness; but Percy Barrow had sent all that to the right-about, and Teb and Tamai had shown the 19th had profited by his care. Before leaving Cairo, the order had been given that no man should go up the Nile who was not at least two-and-twenty, and who had not passed a rigid medical inspection, I think twice. When the train was emptied, and the serjeants were inspecting the carriages, to make sure no articles of the very limited kit had been forgotten, two fellows were found concealed under the seats. How far they had journeyed in that fashion is known only to themselves and their mates. But they were soon routed out and brought before the serjeant-major—I forget whether it was Chambers who was "acting," or Beale, who now holds the warrant, and is a soldier every inch of him, but, like every soldier, has a grievance. And his grievance is that if he had been promoted to the warrant at twenty

years' and one day's service, he would have had a good conduct medal, but as he was promoted at nineteen-and-half years, he is not eligible for it. Did any one ever hear anything more absurd?

The first brought before the serjeant-major was a band-boy—a young Berkshire fellow in the band. He had not come within the conditions, and had been left behind in the depôt at Abbasieh, when the regiment departed for the Nile Campaign. But the band played the squadron to Boulak station, and this boy had made himself a stowaway. He had neither campaign clothing nor helmet, so he was easily "spotted." Said the serjeant-major,—

"What are *you* doing here?"

"Please, sir, I could not help it!"

"Could not help what?"

"Couldn't help coming, sir."

"Very well, you'll have to go before the Colonel."

When he faced the awful presence of poor Barrow, who was as rigid as he was kind and plucky, he was asked by the Colonel,—

"What brings you here?"

"Please, Colonel, I couldn't help it."

"What? How?"

"Please, sir, I was the only man in the regiment that hadn't got a medal and a star, and I didn't see why I should be left in the depôt—I couldn't stand it any longer."

"Stand what?"

"Not having a medal, sir!"

Well orders are orders for colonels as for band-boys, so he had to go back; but when the depôt afterwards had to furnish a squadron for Suakin, he made good his case and was chosen for that service; so among the men who got the medal and star, after all, was Alfred Titchener. Hadn't he the making of a soldier in him? Well, he has left the army.

The other stowaway was named Connel. He had been under Williams-Freeman in the Cairo Military Police; just the one position in which a man could not well enjoy Cairo life. When he, too, was brought before the Colonel, he said, in answer to similar questions, that he had been with the regiment through both the 1882 and 1884 campaigns; that where the regiment went he would like to go; and that he did not think he ought to be debarred on account of being attached to the Military Police. But he had not been "passed," and so he was sent back. For similar reasons he was not permitted to go to Suakin in 1885. Now I call that hard lines. What did he care about street duty at Cairo? The regiment was his home, and those he had fought beside in two campaigns were his brothers. He has probably also left the army, and is likely to have a grudge against it to his dying day. These fellows showed the spirit that is so desirable, and that ought to be

cultivated; but, as poor Barrow said, "Orders are orders" for all ranks. I know Barrow in these cases wished he could have gone against orders, for it was a like spirit he showed himself when, suffering from the spear-wound received at Suakin, from which he afterwards died, he concealed his pain, like the Spartan youth, rather than not lead his regiment to help in the rescue of Gordon. What's that? He did not die in the Nile Campaign it is true, but he died from the old wound very soon after it, and what he must have suffered while he bore a smiling face is known only to the Almighty and His angels. Well might we of the Desert March put up a window to his memory. Ah, yes, Beresford and Talbot and Boscawen—how the old names do crop up!—took the lead in that.

"Yes," one of the others said, "there is nothing the men hate so much as being kept out of fighting. I remember a case in Ashanti. One wing of the 4th King's Own was going up with the advanced column, the other was two days' march behind. Two privates in the advanced wing got hold of some palm wine or native beer, and got gloriously drunk on it. The next day they were had up in the Orderly tent, and Colonel Cameron, as a punishment, ordered them to be sent back to the wing in the rear. After leaving the tent, they had a consultation together, and returned and petitioned the colonel to flog them, instead of sending them back. Seeing that they were thoroughly in earnest, he consented. The next morning the regiment fell in, the triangles were erected, and the men stripped for punishment, but at the last moment the colonel forgave them, and they took their place in the ranks and entered Magdala with the regiment. It was a good display of spirit; but I believe that nineteen out of twenty British soldiers would make the same choice, and take a flogging rather than be sent to the rear, when there is a chance of fighting going on."

I must say that I consider that a good deal of what I had to bear was due to my cousin Lucy. I think if she had left the men alone, and had not been always asking questions and starting new subjects and giving them fresh leads as it were, they would have been contented sometimes to have smoked their pipes quietly, but she was constantly setting them off. The second day after lunch, just after she came in, she asked a question that I saw at once was going to lead to an awful amount of infliction. If she had been sitting close to me, I should have nudged her or stopped her somehow, but it came out suddenly like a bomb-shell among us, "I suppose you were in the Russian campaign." I remember once when I was at Hampton Court I threw a bit of bread into one of the basins, and three big gold-fish rushed at it at once, and the way they squabbled and fought over it was awful. Well, that was nothing to those three men. Of course every one of them had been there and knew all about it, and there was quite a hubbub of voices, and then half a dozen short stories were told. They are all in Lucy's book, but it is no use my giving too many of them, two will be enough in all conscience. The first of these was in answer to Lucy's question, "I suppose you saw the Czar, what was he like?" Girls are always wanting to know what men are like, and yet Lucy could hardly have been in earnest, because the *Illustrated* and *Graphic* gave no end of pictures of him. She could have spoken only to draw those men on. Of course it took; one of them seemed to consider the question especially directed to him, he squared his shoulders, and I saw at once this was going to be an even more wearisome affair than usual, so I settled myself in my chair, and sighed wearedly, shut my eyes, and I am happy to say dozed off before he had been at work many minutes.

The Divine Figure from the North.

THE Romanoffs have always been a soldierly race. Peter the Great did a good deal of miscellaneous fighting in Finland and elsewhere, and commanded at the battle of Pultowa. Alexander I. marched across Europe to participate on French soil in the desperate fighting of Napoleon's most brilliant campaign in the early months of 1814. Nicholas, lad as he was in years, was already a veteran in war when Mortier and Marmont had thrown up the sponge on the heights of Montmartre, and the Imperial father and son rode along the Champs Elysées at the head of the triumphal entry into Paris of the allied armies. Alexander II. crossed the Danube in 1877, with the march of invasion of Turkey, that ended only at the gates of Constantinople. Peter commanded in fact as well as in name ; he was perhaps a better shipwright than a general. Alexander I. was at least the nominal head of the Russian contingent in the great composite host of which Schwarzenberg was actually the Commander-in-chief. But, in a strict military sense, Alexander II. had no definite position of any kind in the field. Head of the armies of Russia as he was, in virtue of his position as the Czar, he was nevertheless not the Commander-in-chief, even nominally, of the great hosts which his behest had drawn from the enthusiastic masses of his devoted subjects. That onerous duty and dignity he had assigned to his brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas. The emperor, in a military sense, made the campaign simply as an august spectator, for whom as monarch and as Russian the operations presented an engrossing interest, and whose presence in the field further inspired the nations with added fervour. Solomon's adage that in the multitude of counsellors that there is wisdom, does not apply to war. "Councils of war never fight," has passed into a proverb ; if it was not true as regards the Russo-Turkish war, it must be owned that the battles directed by councils of war were not always judicious. The American historian of that war, commenting on the lack of unity in the command of the Russo-Roumanian armies which attempted unsuccessfully to carry Osman's lines around Plevna, in September, 1877, thus alludes to the military effects of the emperor's presence :—"Finally the emperor was present, with the

Minister of War and a large staff. The emperor came merely as a spectator, to encourage his troops by his presence, and in the hope of witnessing their victory. But the Emperor of Russia is regarded by every Russian soldier, from the highest to the lowest grade, with a feeling which it is difficult to explain in other countries ; *at all* times his will is law, and his wish a command, and it is not possible for him to be a mere spectator. He took no part, however, in the command, although every report and order was instantly communicated to him, until after the assault of the 11th and 12th of September."

Alexander's life on campaign was a life of extreme simplicity, of great seclusion, always of deep concern, and at times of intense anguish. He was not strictly in the field until he had crossed the Danube ; but, for more than a fortnight before doing so, he lived a sort of campaign life in a little country house a few rods to the westward of the miserable Roumanian village of Simnitza, overhanging the bed of the great river. He himself had accommodation here under a roof, but most of his numerous *entourage* dwelt in tents among the trees of the little park, and in the adjoining paddocks. He sat at meals with the suite in a great marquee on the lawn ; but the repasts served there partook rather too much of the Duke Humphrey sort of fare to accord with the tastes of the dainty aristocrats who, in their various capacities, or in no capacity at all, were in attendance on their sovereign ; and they were lavish patrons, occasionally neglecting to pay their bills, of the temporary restaurant which Brofft, the Bucharest hotel-keeper, had set up close to the gate of the boyard's château in which the emperor quartered. Under the canvas roof of the hostelry where Müller, Herr Brofft's head man, served dubious champagne at twelve roubles a bottle, members of the Imperial family and the nobles and generals of the suite made very merry, no matter how things were going on the further side of the river. But the emperor himself was scarcely seen outside the gates of his own habitation, save to visit the hospitals in which lay the wounded of the crossing, or to drive to a point commanding some long stretch of the great river and the undulating Bulgarian region beyond its swift, brown current. He always travelled on wheels. I don't remember to have seen him oftener than twice on horseback during the whole campaign. The Russians, indeed, are not an equestrian people, that is, they are not addicted to riding because of a love for the saddle. A Russian if he has the choice, will always sooner drive than ride ; and even on campaign it was nothing uncommon to see a general at the head of his division on the march, snugly ensconced in a comfortable carriage.

The day after Dragomiroff had carried the passage of the Danube opposite Simnitza, the Czar crossed the river for the purpose of visiting Sistova, the Bulgarian town on the Turkish side, and of thanking in person the gallant division which had

so valiantly fought its way across the great river, and carried the heights on the other side. There was no formal review; the troops were already too widely dispersed for that. Yolchine's brigade, the one which had crossed first, had got under arms as the emperor came up from the river's brink; and Generals Dragomiroff and Yolchine stood in front of it, along with the young General Skobeleff, who had shown brilliant valour and all his rare gift of leadership, in the action of the previous day. The troops replied to the emperor's greeting in accents which were eloquent of an emotion of absolute adoration; the simple private men gazed on their Czar with entranced eyes of childlike love and awe.

His aspect on that day, when as yet anxiety and ill-health had not broken him down, was singularly imposing. It was Charles Brackenbury who applied to him the term which I have placed at the head of this article; but he did not invent it. It was the exact translation of the phrase in which the Bulgarians of Sistova hailed the potentate who on that afternoon when first his foot touched their soil, shone before their eyes as the more than mortal being who was to be their Saviour, their Redeemer from the rule of the heathen. At that moment they would have worshipped him. They cooled in their adoration presently, and before the campaign was over, there were among them those who openly said that since they were seemingly to be a subject race, they preferred to be subject to the Turk rather than to the Russian.

The glamour of the hour stirred to idealization the stolid, self-centred Bulgarians; but the most indifferent spectator could not but realize the nobility of Alexander's presence, as he returned the greeting of his victorious soldiers. A man not far off sixty, he then looked exceptionally young for his age; the long, dark moustache showed hardly a streak of grey, and the majestic figure was as straight as a pine. He looked a very king of men, as with soldierly gait he strode up to Dragomeroff, shook him cordially by the hand, and arrested his attempt at obeisance by clasping him in a hearty embrace. Tough old Yolchine was similarly honoured, but the Czar turned away from young Skobeleff with a frown, for that brilliant officer had returned from Central Asia under a cloud of baseless accusation, and the opportunity for vindication had not yet been permitted.

Gourko dashed across the Balkans on that promising but abortive raid of his, and the advance-guard of the "Army of the Lom," to the command of which the Cezarewitch was appointed, pushed slowly eastward till it came within sight of the earthworks which the Turks were throwing up as an outer circle of defence to the fortress of Rustchuk. The Emperor and his suite had meantime crossed the Danube, and following in the track of the eastward advance, had taken up quarters in a great farmyard near the village of Pavlo, a position fairly central for receiving intelligence from both lines of advance, and also within easy reach of the

bridge across the river at Simnitza. Some ten days later, the Imperial headquarters moved further eastward, into the little town of Biela, in the direct rear of the Cesarewitch's command. At Biela the headquarters were for several weeks in the enclosed yard of a dismantled Turkish house, which the Bulgarians had quitted when its occupants fled. A high wattled fence surrounded this yard, in which grew a few willow-trees that afforded some shade. The bureaux were in the battered Turkish house. The Emperor lived in two officer's tents, communicating with each other by a canvas-screened alley, up in a corner of the yard under the willow-trees. In the centre of the yard was the large dining marquee in which the emperor joined at meals the officers of his suite, and such of the foreign military attachés as were not in the headquarters of the commander-in-chief. He was wont to breakfast alone in his own tent, where he worked all the morning with Milutin the Minister of War, Ignatieff the Diplomatist, Adlerberg the chamberlain of the palace and the emperor's foster brother, and other high officials who solicited interviews. It must be remembered that from this camp far away in Bulgaria, the emperor was administering the affairs of a huge empire whose capital was many hundred miles distant.

At noon luncheon was served in the great marquee, and all the suite were wont to gather in the yard for conversation a short time in advance. The emperor came out from his own private tent, shaking hands with the nearest members of the suite, greeting always the foreign attachés, as he passed into the marquee. His seat was in the centre of the right-hand side of the table, usually with General Suwaroff on one side of him and General Milutin on the other, the foreign attachés sitting opposite. The greatest simplicity prevailed in the fare served at the Imperial table; three courses were the rule at dinner, and champagne was given only on exceptional occasions. When the time for coffee came, the emperor gave the signal for smoking, and immediately the marquee was filled with a cloud of cigarette smoke. He was wont to talk freely at table, directing most of his conversation to the foreign officers opposite to him, and occasionally, especially when addressing Colonel Wellesley, the British representative, his tone was that of grave badinage.

No elaborate precautions were to outward seeming taken for the emperor's safety, living here in Biela in the midst of a curiously-mixed population of wretched Bulgarians and prowling Turks—for all the Turks had not fled from Biela. His only escort consisted of a handful of the cossacks of the Imperial guard on duty at the entrance of the yard in which he lived. He drove out every day, attended by an escort of a dozen of these; and he would make the round on foot of the hospitals in the environs of the little town, accompanied by a single companion, a cossack following a little distance behind. He spent many an hour in talking with

the poor ailing fellows in the wretched hospitals, to whom his kindly presence did more good than all the efforts of the surgeons. Once during a drive his eye fell upon a miserable company of Turkish fugitives, among whom were many women and children, lurking in a wood. He at once alighted and went among them, and by assurances of protection he succeeded in prevailing on them to return to their homes in Biela, where he had them supplied with rations until they were able to do something for themselves.

After the disaster met with by Krüdener and Shackoskoy in front of Plevna on the 30th of July, and Gourko's enforced retirement to the Bulgarian side of the Balkans, the Imperial head-quarters were moved westward to a village called Gorni Studen, about equidistant from Plevna, Sistova and Tirnova. Biela had become poisonous by reason of an utter disregard of all sanitary precautions, and the emperor had been ailing from low fever, rheumatism, and asthma, the last his chronic ailment. At Gorni Studen he abandoned tent-life, and only occasionally came to the general table in the mess marquee. A dismantled Turkish house was fitted up for him after a fashion, and his bed-room was a tiny chamber with mud walls and a mud floor. It was in the balcony of this house where I had an interview with him in August, when I had ridden in from the Shipka with the unexpected good news that Radetski was holding his own stoutly in the St. Nicholas position among the Shipka rocks, against the fierce assaults of Mehemet Ali's Turks.

I had a difficulty in recognizing him, so changed was he from the early days at Simnitza. He had shrunken visibly, he stooped, his head had gone down between his shoulders, and his voice was broken and tremulous. He was gaunt, worn, and haggard, his nervous system seemed quite shattered. There was a hunted expression in his eye, and he gasped for breath in the spasms of the asthma that afflicted him. I left him with the vivid apprehension that he was not to break the spell that was said to condemn every Romanoff to the grave before the age of sixty.

The spell of course was nonsense, yet it is the fact that Czar Alexander's father, and the four male Romanoffs of the generation preceding Nicholas, the sons of the mentally affected Emperor Paul, died before the attainment of this age, and of disease affecting the brain. Alexander I., who was Napoleon's enemy, his friend, and then again his bitter and successful enemy, died at the age of forty-eight in a deep, brooding, melancholy, which Metternich described as a "weariness of life." His elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, had the good sense to know that his mental condition rendered him unfit to rule. If he had been a private person, he would probably have spent most of his life in an asylum. He died in his fifty-second year of congestion of the brain. The Grand Duke Michael ended his life by falling from his horse in a fit at the age of forty-eight, and had shown before his death so

much morbid irritability, that his physician did not hesitate to treat him as insane. If the Western Powers had temporized for two years with the imperious Nicholas, he would have been dead, and there would have been no Crimean War. And it is the fact that the professional assurance had been communicated to the English Government so early as 1853, that Nicholas had at most only two years to live; he died four months before the two years were up. A well-known English physician, Dr. A. B. Granville, had detected in Nicholas the symptoms of the hereditary disease of his family, from which he predicted his death within the term mentioned. He communicated his prognosis to Lord Palmerston, as a strong argument for the maintenance of a temporizing policy until death should have delivered Russia and Europe from a Czar whose mental balance was disturbed. The authenticity of this letter, which was published in the *Times* in 1855, was vouched for to Count Vitzthum on the day of its publication by Lord Palmerston himself, who added that the English Government could be guided only by facts, and could not allow their policy to be influenced by the opinion of a physician.

As epilepsy is the domestic curse of the Hapsburgs, so hypochondria is the family malady of the Romanoffs. Alexander was a prey to it in the Gorni Studen hovel. But it had not full sway over him. There was something wonderfully pathetic in the eagerness with which he grasped at the expressed belief of an unprofessional neutral like myself, in the face of the apprehensions to the contrary of all about him, that Radetski would be able to make good the tenure of his position on the top of the Shipka.

The Czar was present in the field during the six days' struggle around Plevna, in the September of the war. The sappers had constructed for him on a little eminence out of the usual line of hostile fire, a sort of look-out place from which was visible a great sweep of the scene of action. Behind it was a marquee in which was a long table continually spread with food and wine, where the suite supported nature jovially while men were dying hard by in their thousands. As for the Czar himself, after the first two days he neither ate nor drank. Anxiety visibly devoured him. He could not be restrained from leaving the observatory and going around among the gunners. I watched him on the little balcony of the look-out place, late on the afternoon of the fifth day of the struggle —it was his fête-day save the mark!—as he stood there in the sullen autumn weather, gazing out with haggard, straining eyes, at the efforts to storm the great Grivitza redoubt. Assault after assault had been delivered; assault after assault had failed; now the final desperate struggle was being made, the forlorn hope of the day. The Turkish fire crushed down his Russians as they battled their way up the slope, slippery already with Roumanian blood: the pale face on the balcony quivered, and the tall figure winced and cowered. As he stood there bearing his cross in

solitary anguish, he was a spectacle of majestic misery that could never be forgotten.

After Plevna had fallen in December, the emperor returned to St. Petersburg, there to be greeted with a reception, the like of which for pure enthusiasm I have never witnessed. From the railway-station he drove straight to the Kasan Cathedral, in accordance with the custom which presents to Russian Emperors that in setting out for or returning from any enterprise, they shall kiss the glittering image of the Holy Virgin of Kasan which the Cathedral enshrines. Its interior was a wonderful spectacle. People had spent the night sleeping on the marble floor that they might be sure of a place in the morning. There had been no respect of persons in the admissions. The mujik in his skins stood next the soldier-noble whose bosom glittered with decorations. The peasant woman and the princess knelt together at the same shrine. At the tinkle of a bell the great doors were thrown wide open and on the surge of cold air was borne a great throbbing volume of sounds, the roar of the cheering of vast multitudes, the booming of artillery, the clash of the pealing joy-bells. In stately procession the emperor reached the altar, bent his head, and his lips touched the sacred image. When he turned to leave the building, the wildest confusion of enthusiasm laid hold of the throng. His people closed in about the Czar till he had no power to move. The great struggle was but to touch him, and the chaos of policemen, officers, shrieking women, and enthusiastic peasants swayed and heaved to and fro ; the emperor in the centre, pale, his lips trembling with emotion, just as I had seen him when his troops were cheering him on the battlefield ; struggling for the bare possibility to stand or move forward, for he was lifted by the pressure clean off his feet, and whirled about helplessly. At length, extricated by a wedge of officers, he reached his carriage, only to experience almost as wonderful an ovation when he reached the raised portico of the Winter Palace. As for the Czarevna, the lady who is now empress of Russia, her experiences at the Winter Palace were unique. As her carriage, following that of the emperor, approached the terrace, the populace utilized it as a point whence to see and cheer the emperor. Men scrambled on to the horses, the box, the roof, the wheels ; progress became utterly impossible. A group of cadets and students, who lined the base of the terrace, were equal to the occasion. They dragged open the carriage door by dint of immense exertion ; they lifted out the bright little lady, who clearly was greatly enjoying the fun, and they passed her from hand to hand above their heads, till the emperor caught her, lifted her over the balustrades, and set her down by his side on the terrace. I saw the metal heels of her remarkably neat boots sparkling in the winter sunshine over the heads of the throng.

The fall of Plevna, and the welcome of his capital, had restored

the Czar to apparent health and spirits. I watched him as he moved around the great salon of the Winter Palace, greeting his guests at the home-coming reception. He strode the inlaid floor a very emperor, upright of figure, proud of gait, arrayed in a brilliant uniform, and covered with decorations. A glittering court and suite thronged about the stately man with enthusiastically respectful homage; the dazzling splendour of the Winter Palace formed the setting of the sumptuous picture; and as I gazed on the magnificent scene, I could hardly realize that the central figure of it, in the pomp of his Imperial state, was of a verity the self-same man in whose presence I had stood in the squalid Bulgarian hovel, the same worn, anxious, shabby, wistful man, who with spasmodic utterance and the expression in his eyes as of a hunted deer, had asked me breathless questions as to the episodes and issue of the fighting.

In many respects the monarch whom the Nihilists slew was a grand man. He was absolutely free from that corruption which is the blackest curse of Russia, and whose taint is among the nearest relatives of the Great White Czar. He had the purest aspirations to do his loyal duty toward the huge empire over which he ruled, and never did he spare himself in toilsome work. He took few pleasures; the melancholy of his position made sombre his features, and darkened for him all the brightness of life. For he had the bitterest consciousness of the abuses that were alienating the subjects who had been wont in their hearts, as on their lips, to couple the names of "God and the Czar." He knew how the great nation writhed and groaned; and he, absolute despot though he was, writhed and groaned no less in the realization of his impotency to ameliorate the evils. For although honest and sincerely well intentioned, there was a fatal weakness in the nature of Alexander II. True, he began his reign with an assertion of masterfulness; but then, unworthy favourites gained his ear; his family compassed him about; the whole huge *vis inertiæ* of immemorial rottenness and obstructive officialism lay doggedly athwart the hard path of reform. Alexander's aspirations were powerless to pierce the dense, solid obstacle; and the consciousness of his impotency, with the no less disquieting consciousness that it behoved him to cleanse the Augæan stable of the State, embittered his whole later life.

The sudden stoppage of the monotonous flow of words woke me suddenly. Lucy was just murmuring something about very interesting. I have often wondered to myself how even the straightest women will tell what we may call civil lies; but I thought that Lucy would really have this quite heavily on her conscience afterwards. I think she noticed that I lifted my eyebrows, and that it was purely out of spite that she asked me, "Don't you think so?" I was too taken aback to answer at the moment, and I was thinking how I could put it civilly, without telling a downright lie, when she went on. "That account of the hand to hand fight between the Cossack and the Turk was very exciting, was it not?" Of course, as I had not heard a word, I did not know what she meant; but I said, "Yes, that part of the story was certainly exciting." Then Lucy laughed, and the three fellows roared, and I saw that she had just been humbugging me, which was not at all a cousinly sort of thing to do, I considered. However, I lit a fresh cigar, and said that when a fellow's leg kept him awake at nights, there was nothing very extraordinary that I could see in his dosing off occasionally. I hoped, anyhow, that this little affair would put the Russian Campaign out of their minds, but the subject was too hot, and one of the others, who had no doubt been sitting on thorns while the first was having his innings, broke in,—

"It was a curious affair, that surrender of the Turkish lines, just before the Armistice. I heard the story both from Skobeleff and from Moukhtar, and got at all the ins and outs of it."

And then he went straight off, being afraid, I expect, that the third man would cut in before him. Of course I could not get to sleep this time, and had to listen to the whole thing; but I am bound to say that at the end, who had deceived who, or how it all came about, I had not the least idea. There was one comfort, that it did not matter a rap one way or the other. This fellow, I observed, always told his stories in the third person. I suppose he had what fellows call a dramatic turn of mind, or else he wanted to get rid of the I, that the other two were always lugging in. Anyhow, it made a change, and as he gave some sort of imitation of the way the people talked, it did not make one so drowsy as the stories where they kept on in the same tone of voice.

Achmet's Treason.*

VERY pale and careworn looked Sultan Abdul Hamed II., as he sat in his council-chamber in his favourite palace of Yildiz Kiosk, or the Star Villa, on the hill behind Beshiktash, what time a January day was dawning eleven years ago. Early as it was, the council was fully attended. Indeed, it had been summoned over-night, and had sat through the small hours. There was old Ahmed Vefyk, the Grand Vizier, although he preferred to be called Prime Minister; there were Valentine Baker Pacha, and Reouf Pacha, and Fuad Pacha, and a throng of civilian pachas, besides the First Secretary of his Majesty. Two deaf and dumb mulatto boys stood by the portières with wands to carry messages which they could not comprehend. Most of the civilians sat on divans round the chamber; most of the soldiers were at a large table covered with maps, especially maps of the Nose of Thrace. All were in full dress, their gold-laced uniforms flashing with diamonds in the orders they wore; the Sultan alone had but a plain frock coat buttoned closely up, and with no more ornament than a clerk in the Ministry of Finance. There was a singular silence considering how many were present, for his Majesty had begun to speak and then stopped, and leaned his head on his hand as if musing. None cared to break the imperial reverie. At that moment the National air was heard, and the clash of arms as the guard outside saluted. The mutes raised the portières; all but the Sultan stood up as there entered in simple undress blue sack coat with red piping, and not even a bit of ribbon on the breast to relieve it, Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, charged with the defence of the capital from the advancing Muscovite hordes. The Mushir made lowly reverence to the monarch, and then took his place at the table.

"You are late, my friend," said the Ottoman emperor; "but not too late, and I am well assured you have slept no more than we. My troops . . . ?"

"Are all hard at work, your Majesty; such devotion even I have never seen before."

"It is well, my friend; we need your advice. Here is a message just delivered from the English Eltchi, who says,—

* Notice: this story has been dramatised.

"'Your Majesty's request for aid was fully telegraphed last night in cypher to London, and the reply has just arrived that a meeting of the Cabinet has been summoned for this afternoon. Meanwhile I am to say to your Majesty that England will not see the Ottoman Empire reduced to extremity.'"

"Extremity!" cried Fuad Pacha; "why, the Giaours, I mean the Muscovs, are within fifty miles!"

"But yesterday the Eltchi told me that England is resolved the Russians shall not have Constantinople. If they have all else, why not Stamboul also? For myself I care nothing," answered his Majesty; "if my country is lost, the fact that England does not wish the Czar to rule the Bosphorus is no consolation, and . . . remember how I was encouraged to resist!"

"Sire, time presses," said Moukhtar, as vehemently as his quiet nature and respect for his sovereign would permit. "The Muscov is within two days' march of my lines at Tchataldja."

"Truly, then, let us decide on our defence . . . till England takes her resolve," sadly spoke Abdul Hamid.

"All is ready, my liege, if I have only men enough. The earth-works are completed and armed with three hundred guns. Thanks to American supplies, there is ample ammunition. All the works have provisions for five days. As I said in Asia to an Englishman, your Majesty's soldiers need nothing at any time but biscuits, shoes, and cartridges, and these they have now. Fuad Pacha answers for my right; Baker Pacha for my centre; Reouf Pacha for my left. But I want ten thousand men more."

"Alas!" was the melancholy reply of majesty.

"My lines," contined Moukhtar, "are twenty miles long, all of which must be held; but I need apprehend a fight along eight miles only, and for those eight miles I have but 25,000 men. With 35,000, they should be safe; with 45,000, I could hold them against the world, so long as our ships cover my flanks."

One of the mutes here advanced with a telegram which was opened by Ahmed Vefyk.

"Your Majesty," said he, "ten thousand men, the remnant of the army of Sulieman, but mostly without arms, are being shipped at Enos and elsewhere, and will be here to-morrow."

The sad expression for an instant left the face of the Sultan, and Moukhtar broke in,—

"With these men, worn out though they be, I will answer for the safety of Stamboul."

"Then let them be clad and armed and sent to the lines at once," said the wearied Padishah.

"But, sire," pleaded a civilian pacha named Achmet, "your own safety, if the Mushir should deceive himself?"

"Allah-il-Allah; it is in His hands."

"Sire, I would that you sent to the Russians, and asked them for an armistice," persisted Achmet.

"Yes, yes," cried another or two, "if they will stay where they are!"

"On those terms," replied the Grand Vizier, "yes, indeed, time is safety."

"But for the Muscovs time is loss; the winter is killing them," said Said Pacha with a grin.

"I would rather trust the Russians than the English," observed Mahmoud Pacha.

"And I," softly added Achmet; "besides, we could only fail, and even to gain two days in negotiation would be something."

"Two days would be everything," Moukhtar declared; "but I would treat, not yield."

Fuad and Baker expressed their concurrence.

"Then whom shall I send?" asked his Majesty.

"I propose that we send Achmet Pacha," put in Mahmoud, "and my office will find his staff."

"It is understood that Achmet Pacha goes as soon as possible through our lines to Adrianople," said the Sultan, with revived spirit in his voice and manner, "and there treats with the brother of the Czar. But only to gain time, not to yield. And if the great prince is as generous as he is brave, he will not drive me to extremity."

"Ah, sire," quoth Moukhtar, "if you look for generosity from a Russ, you will find good faith among the Greeks, and valour among the Armenians."

"I quite understand," interrupted Achmet, "that I am only to obtain delay till England's answer comes. After that—"

Here one of the mutes handed Moukhtar a letter.

"Sire! here is a summons to surrender the lines of Tchataldja, addressed to me, 'with much respect' from General Skobeleff. My A.D.C. and good cousin Osman has just brought it in. The Muscovs demand possession, with all guns, in forty-eight hours from to-day at dawn. Majesty, I suppose I know my answer?"

"Yes," exclaimed the Sultan rising with heightened colour; "if they want the lines, let them take them. Weaker works have before now defied the efforts of other Goths, and what Belisarius could do to the Huns on yonder position, that can Ghazi Moukhtar do to the Russians there."

"Never, sire," replied the Mushir, "has Stamboul fallen when defended there, save when it has succumbed to treason within. Oh, master, beware of treason!"

"Who speaks of treason?" shouted Mahmoud.

"I," quietly said Moukhtar.

"And whose?" demanded Achmet.

"I am not a prophet," replied Moukhtar, with a smile, "though I have studied astrology. But I say again, the crown of the Bosphorus has never fallen in fair fight; it has been betrayed; and what has been may be."

"We might spare his Majesty unnecessary anxiety; there is enough without speculation on the improbable," said Mahmoud.

"It is the improbable, or at least the unexpected which happens," retorted Moukhtar.

"If your Majesty is as faithfully served behind the lines of Tchataldja as in front of them, all is not lost," observed Achmet.

"But time presses," Mahmoud urged; "haste, good Achmet Effendim, the Russians ever advance, and we stay here combating dreams."

"I trust not dreams which come true," said Moukhtar to himself.

"Farewell, good Vizier Achmet," broke in the Sultan; "our trust is in Allah and you."

As Achmet and Mahmoud were leaving the Council Chamber, Moukhtar spoke again.

"Say rather, sire, in Allah and the Prophet and your army."

"Ah! I had!" moaned the distracted monarch; "but how many armies have broken down on my side!"

Moukhtar gravely answered, 'Sire, even in 1829 the Russians did not dare to pass Tchorlu and Midia or face positions which were then unfortified, but have now been strengthened on the advice of the English engineer Chesney, till, as he said, they are another Torres Vedras. Besides, we must remember, if we are somewhat demoralized, the enemy has been much weakened by his winter campaign, and if the worst should come to the worst, better we should all perish in the flames of Stamboul than yield the sacred city to the foe which has sought it for a thousand years, or conclude a dishonourable treaty, selling your birthright. Ah! sire, when I am firm on the lines be you firm in the divan. More is lost by concession than by the sword. And we may preserve our religion and our honour."

The Sultan here embraced Moukhtar and left the chamber amid profound obeisances, attended by his Secretary. Then Moukhtar turned to Reouf, Fuad, and Baker.

"Let us go out to the lines." He added to Ahmed Vefyk and Said,—

"Beware of treason. In writing out Achmet's powers, limit him to reference, and let the decision be with you, and not with him, or all is lost."

"Then why did you not oppose his nomination?" demanded Said.

"Because I can prove nothing. But beware of treason in the Council."

* * * * * * *

General Skobeleff, big, fair, hearty, jovial, though the loose folds of his undress coat and the lines in his bearded face told of the hardships he had undergone, stood at his advance-posts on the bare rolling

ground east of Tchorlu in the midst of the Nose of Thrace. Near him was the 16th Division of the Russian Army, not the famous 16th, for that had been so nearly annihilated on the Green Hills at Plevna that it had been reconstituted. Beside him was Colonel Müller, his chief of the staff, and both of them, holding maps in their hands, were at the same time examining with field-glasses the contour of the country in front of them.

"It is very strong, general," said Müller; "even stronger than we found the Loftcha road redoubts, and we are not likely to forget them, I think."

"Yes," Skobeleff replied, as though he were calculating a chess move; "as strong, but not so strongly held, perhaps. This Moukhtar was beaten before, you know, though it is true Melikoff and Lazareff had two to his one."

"But he beat them for months," Müller replied; "so long as forces were nearly equal, and I believe Lazareff tried him several times. What Lazareff failed in, it is no discredit to any man to shrink from."

"Indeed, yes," said Skobeleff, "so far as I can understand the Armenian campaign, Moukhtar behaved very well, but here is not a position like Zewin or the Aladja Dagh."

"It is stronger," Müller urged; "because, unlike them, it cannot be turned.

"Then it must be taken!"

"It will cost a brigade!"

"If it cost a division!"

"That redoubt near the watershed is the key of the position," said Müller.

"Your judgment is right. That redoubt must be carried by assault. But I shall attack on both flanks, then concentrate on the left, for it will suit me as well to take Belgrad Forest, and hold the Euxine Mouth of the Bosphorus, as to take the city, and in the act of concentrating from the right deliver a division at yonder key redoubt."

"Constantinople lies at your feet," Müller opined.

"Oh dear no!" answered Skobeleff, "there is a second line, not so well armed or so strong, but yet formidable, six miles from the walls. And that second line I do not mean to touch, but to turn by what you Germans—"

"General!"

"Was not your father a German, Müller? Well, well; some Germans are my dearest friends, and you first and best of them. By what these German maps call the Wald von Belgrad, and the English Belgrad Wood. But it is a big wood—one of those woods in which the English joke says the wood cannot be seen for the trees. Holding Belgrad, I hold the Bosphorus."

"Yes, and the water-supply of the city. So!"

"And I will make my headquarters in the English Embassy at Therapia, a comfortable house, I am told, with fair cellars."

Here the green-coated Russians were approached by a tall, slim, dark man, in a loose blue jacket and blue kepi, and a short, fair man, in a Norfolk jacket and a soft felt hat.

"Ah, general, assault to-morrow?" said the latter, who was named McGahan.

"Perhaps," replied Skobeleff. "Captain Greene, will you kindly take my glass? The key is the great redoubt, I think."

The American attaché answered, "It would seem so, but it is held in strength, and is very like No. 7 at Plevna. The whole line is strongly held."

"Is it any use staying here?" McGahan interrupted. "I think yon gun is training on us, and you would be missed to-morrow, general."

"Yes," said Skobeleff, "there is no need to take risks, except for example's sake, and my work to-day is nearly done. See that the horses are put in safety, and let us lie down and eat."

At this moment a shrapnel shell burst nearly overhead.

"Just in time to flavour our sausages," laughed Skobeleff. "But except by accident they can't hurt us. Now, McGahan, here's to the beauties of Stamboul! Müller, always susceptible, here's to your fortunes with the fair Turk! Greene, here's to—whoever may prove an excuse for the glass." Before he could carry the flask cup to his lips, a piece of shell knocked it out of his hand. "What a waste of good liquor!" he cried. "But I forgot, Mahomet forbids wine and raki."

"So he might," observed McGahan, "if it's like the stuff of these parts. Oh, for a noggin of Hollywood Old Rye or Coleraine!"

"See, here comes an orderly," said Greene; "Great Scott, he's down—only the horse hurt; see, the man crawls along. Why, it's your incorrigible Irishman, McGahan."

"I would have been an Irishman myself but for an accident of a voyage," laughed the correspondent.

"Come on, Pat," shouted Skobeleff, "get up, man; this is not half as hot as it was in Spain. I'm ashamed to see you crawling like a worm."

"An' if I don't crawl," Pat replied, "sure I'll nivir git to you. My ancle's no good to me at all, bad scran to it." Here Skobeleff and McGahan jumped to his aid. "An' my blessin's on ye both for gintlemen. But sure it isn't blown aff me. Ah, the poor baste just gave one roll and the saddle caught me there—ah! masther dear, is it a drop of whisky ye have, or anything Russian or Turkish, so long as it's liquor."

"Not a drop," said McGahan, "a shell just blew the last away. But try a blast of your pipe."

"Let me see," cried Skobeleff, stooping, and twisting the ancle back, "is that better? Oh, you're not dead yet, Pat."

"Divil a fear of me, sir, not dead till I see the Sultan's houris yonder, and then I'll die wi' delight, or they lie."

"I will ride in and send out a litter," volunteered Greene; "but by the way, Pat, what brought you here?"

"Think o' that, now," replied the Hibernian, "and me to forgit the letther from the Imperor's brother."

Skobeleff took the letter, opened and read it aloud,—

"Report if you can attack to-morrow, and what support you require. We are not strong, so do not attack unless you are confident. Do nothing rashly. A defeat now would imperil the whole gains of the campaign."

"True," said Greene.

"Indeed, and he's very prudent—if that's the word," grumbled McGahan.

"Still it is left to me," mused Skobeleff, half aloud.

"Yes, the responsibility," Müller urged.

"And the danger," McGahan put in.

"And the honour," said Greene firmly.

"As we have been together through so many risks," McGahan continued, "you will not think me cowardly if I say that telegram means that the Grand Duke intends you to attack at your own risk. General Gourko's hand is there."

"Ha!" almost shouted Skobeleff, "do you think he wants the Guard to have time to arrive? Here, Müller; take it down for general orders, we attack at dawn. The fire will open on both flanks. In concentrating towards the left the new 16th Division will carry the centre redoubt, at any cost, mind. And you will see all arranged accordingly, my good Müller. Details to generals of brigade under your inspection. Individuality will be needed as well as plan to-morrow. Let them all survey their own ground. Send an orderly or a telegram to General Gourko that I may need one of his brigades to occupy the Turkish works about ten o'clock. He need not hurry before that. What's this—?"

Here an orderly came up and handed Skobeleff a telegram.

"Bah!" he exclaimed, frowning and biting his lip. "Baulked! Ha, ha! They are negotiating for peace. Achmet Pacha is at Adrianople, and wants me to hold on until he can come to terms. Likely, very!"

"The Grand Duke will oblige him," observed Greene, "for policy will come in and moderation will look well in the eyes of Europe."

"Nay," said the general, "it will be ascribed to English threats."

"England won't fight," exclaimed McGahan; "not likely. And she couldn't if she would. The time has gone."

"Müller!" cried Skobeleff, "my orders remain as they were; we shall see what the night brings forth. Telegraph the Grand Duke and say that unless I have orders before five o'clock I attack at dawn. And now for a doze." . . .

"Where is the general?" called loudly A.D.C. Lieut. Prince Paskewitch.

"Ah, General Skobeleff; you know I was taken prisoner. Well, I have escaped and brought with me proof positive that England does not interfere. It has been kept back from the Sultan, but an Armenian, who helped me to escape, sold me a copy of the telegram for an order for 5000 roubles on the Imperial Treasury. But I am faint. . ."

"Here, some of you, take the lieutenant—I mean the captain—to Colonel Müller's tent, and tell the colonel I am here. Poor Abdul Hamid, poor Moukhtar Pacha! aye, poor Turkey! Traitors within and weak sons; traitors without and strong foes!" Here he began to hum "the Cossack's Farewell," and strolled about, presently muttering, "To take Constantinople—immortality! to fall in taking it—the ideal end of a Russian soldier! to fail in taking it—ah! that would be impossible for me if I lived. This hour I had dreamt of for years without daring to hope for it. The sacred city in the hollow of my hand—of *my* hand. Reserved for me!" And then he sang loudly,—

"To dear Russia's standard gather,
Sons from near and far;
Yes, we hail thee, Ruler, Father,
We are thine, O Czar."

And then he changed to the chorus of the national hymn,—

"Great is our Czar in peace,
And greater still in war,
Oh, may he be lord in both,
Long live the Czar."

"Most musical, most melancholy," laugned McGahan, as he limped along, for, like his servant, he had been lamed. "Ah, general, if you could not fight better than you sing, it would not be well for holy Russia."

"Come, old comrade, and cheer me up," said Skobeleff; "I am not wont, as you will remember, to be sad on the eve of a fight, but to-night I have a foreboding of evil. And yet, think of it, I, captain of Cossacks, the harum-scarum of Khiva, the wild colonel who was too imprudent to be trusted, the unattached one as we crossed the Danube, I—" and here he slapped the correspondent on the shoulder and looked earnestly into his face—"I, the Carlist free-lance, the ne'er-do-well, the officer who was not good enough for the Imperial Guard, I to have the glory of capturing Constantinople! My eyes play the woman as I think of it."

McGahan said laughingly, "Vive la guerre! Better, they say in Ireland, to be born lucky than rich."

"We cannot fail in the morning, think you?"

"In your dictionary there is no such word."

"Oh, I don't know. We did not succeed in the three days'

fighting when I lost half my dear division, and when the tipsy doctor told me we had left our best soldiers behind and those who were coming back were mainly skulkers—it was true, McGahan. Ah, I see that drunken doctor again pointing to the works in front of Krishin, where I left my hundred and sixty officers and eight thousand poor fellows."

"But this will be child's play in comparison with the work on the Green Hills. See, here comes Pat. Compose yourself. Well, Pat, what have you there? Limping still, I see."

"Oh to the devil wid it for an ancle, and indeed it's not much use to me. But the poor baste. Sure he's gone where the poor bastes go; and now, general, you haven't a white horse for to-morrow's fight at all at all, and the men will not know you without your poor Pacha. But I tould your servant to put out a white uniform for you, and perhaps that will do as well."

"Thank you, Pat," said the general; "but what have you got in the basket?"

"Oh, just a morsel to ate and a sup to drink. Way down in the village beyant, there's an ould Armenian wid as purty a colleen for a daughter as yed see in a day's walk or a month o' Sundays, and shure some iv the liftinants an' captains had found out its a sort iv publican he is; and bedad when he saw a bit of silver his eyes sparkled like an ould-clothes man's behind Patrick's Cathedral, when he handles the money iv a slip iv a boy fresh from the cattle-market; and there was nothin' in the house too good for me nor out iv it, an' I got ye a bit iv a chicken and some bread and cake, and a dhrop, an' Captain Greene's servant has got a bottle iv champagne itself, and if ye will stay out this could night we'll thry and make ye comfortable anyhow."

Greene here joined them, and they sat down to supper, when Müller arrived.

"Any news, good Müller?" asked the general.

"Nothing, Excellency; but your telegraph clerk has been killing time by a conversation with the Adrianople clerk, and the rumour goes there that the Turks will not agree to our conditions, and that the special embassy returns to-night."

"Oh, thank you, Müller, that is good news indeed. But what terms do they wish to impose upon the Turk?"

"I have no official information, Excellency, but the clerk thinks they wish the Turks to give up their works as a preliminary."

"That they will never do," said Skobeleff; "that indeed would be an end to everything, even to my hopes. And to ask a soldier like Moukhtar Pacha to give up the lines he has made so strong! Oh, no! The Grand Duke can never have asked that."

"It will be all the same in twenty-four hours," cried Greene; "except for a few thousand Russians and a few more thousand Turks who will never see the sun set again."

"But as the sweet English song says," replied the general, "oh,

the difference to me! And to poor Moukhtar Pacha. When it is all over, he will wish he had never left the family silk-factory. Ah! I'm afraid that sounds like a sneer. But he's a noble man and a fine soldier; a nobler and finer soldier than, Osman because he is intellectual, and not what you English and Americans call a mere bulldog."

Here an orderly brought a telegram from an Adrianople colleague for McGahan, who read it aloud:

"Arranged for wire after fight to-morrow. Negotiations broken down."

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" cried Skobeleff, jumping up,—

"Long live the Emperor,
Long live the Czar."

"Here's another telegram. What's this? 'To General Skobeleff, by order of his Imperial Highness, the Commander-in-Chief. If perfectly prepared, you will attack at or before dawn, with the 16th and 30th Divisions, the 3rd and 4th Rifle Brigades, and the 1st Cavalry Division. General Radetsky is moving up in support, but without waiting for him, if your corps is ready, select the weakest point of the Ottoman line and attack it with energy. Signed, Zotoff, Lieutenant-General, Chief of the Staff.' Now, indeed, is my good fortune at its height. Oh, my mother, happy mother, whose son will take Constantinople! Ah, Greene, pardon my weakness. Your Anglo-Saxon mothers are not what ours are! Colonel Müller, you have your orders?"

"They are gone, general; all is ready."

"Then good night. I will here snatch a little rest, and, good Müller, and good Greene, and my old comrade McGahan, you must try to sleep in your quarters. Pat will remain with me."

"Hurroo!" shouted Pat; "thank ye kindly, giniral; this is a great day for ould Ireland intirely. Now, giniral, just a wee dhrop to keep the cold out!"

"Thank you, Pat! Here's to the glory of Holy Russia. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow! What is it Shakespeare says of dusky death? Oh yes, 'Death and his brother sleep!'"

* * * * * * *

On the lines dominating the oak scrub marshes of the Nose of Thrace walked Moukhtar Pacha that same night, wearing a flowing mantle of sables, and whisking a gold-headed cane as though he were annoyed. A good camp fire threw his short and sturdy figure into relief as he turned about and said,—

"They will attack in the morning, and I am without the least instructions. My new men have not arrived, but I can hold my own. Osman Effendi, see if there is nothing doing in the telegraph tent. . . . Nothing?—then telegraph to the Seraskierate, and say, 'The Russians are getting into position for the attack at

dawn. I have not enough men. They must send Suleiman's men up at once, and every available man to the centre of my line.' Strange that I do not hear what Achmet is doing—I more and more distrust that man. Four days now, and no word from him of any sort. Osman Effendi, the division facing us is the 16th, is it not?"

"So the peasant said," was the reply.

"Ah, that is General Skobeleff's. It will be warm work at daylight, Cousin Osman!"

Here an officer came up and saluted Osman, who said to Moukhtar,—

"Excellency, an aide de camp from Achmet Pacha has arrived with a Russian flag of truce, by the road through Silivri, having come by train as far as Tchorlu. He has orders to communicate with no one till he reaches his Majesty, and says he comes for further instructions. He desires to reach Yildiz Kiosk to-night."

After musing, Moukhtar replied,—

"He must pass, and give him fresh horses. Did he refuse to see me?"

"Absolutely, your Excellency."

"Hem! very well . . . I do not like this at all, and if negotiations are going on and he comes for fresh instructions, why this movement of the Muscovs? Osman Effendi, despatch a messenger. Tell Baker Pacha to look to his outposts, and if he feels any further Russian movements to-night, he should give them a few shells for light, as there is no moon. One should receive visitors warmly and brilliantly."

The Mushir now lit a cigarette and placed it in his six-inch amber tube, then resumed his stroll. An orderly then came to him with a despatch.

"Ha! from our good English Baker. He does not go to sleep. With a few like him we should have had another story to tell in Armenia. Oh for an English division, or even an English brigade to-night."

He said this while he was unsealing the despatch and the orderly was bringing a camp lantern. "How! 'Russians assembling in force between Tchorlu and Seraï. Seem to be reinforced from direction of Rodosto. Moving towards Black Sea, but gradually inclining along railway. Have placed a battery there, and myself will hold Mount Elias. Peasant says they have fortified three farms, and the outposts report movement from their right throughout night. In my judgment they attack before day. Can you spare me two battalions more?' Osman Effendi, bring the map and take my orders in writing. The whole line will stand to arms by half-battalions every hour. At first sound of gun, or rocket, or small arms, every man to his post, and make a last stand for Allah, the Prophet and the Kaliph. And then, Cousin Osman, you and

I will rest by turns for half an hour apiece, under shelter of this good gun. I will take my round while you telegraph that order along the line."

Then he looked at his watch and continued,—

"It is but two hours till daybreak."

Osman returned, and the Mushir asked,—

"No news, Osman, from his Majesty or Stamboul?"

"None, Excellency."

"Ah! we shall have to send them some soon if I am not mistaken. Look! what is that? a rocket followed by a gun."

He jumped on the parapet and threw open his fur coat, displaying on the breast of his patrol jacket a diamond star.

"Ah, Excellency," cried Osman, "that shows even in the firelight, it may draw fire when it is a little lighter."

"My sovereign gave it to me for beating the Russians last August," Moukhtar replied, "as I shall to-day. . . . Just becoming day. The rascals press forward very boldly."

"Your Excellency's eyes are very good, and the glass General Kemball gave you beyond Kars is a wonderful glass. But have you seen no movement yonder, as though a flag of truce were being prepared? With the English glass I can see less than without it, but I may deceive myself."

"Yes, indeed; I can see a white flag. And, lo! they cease firing."

"And we?"

"Not till they withdraw their columns and skirmishers. It may be a trick, but the Muscov will not trick me."

"They will perhaps scarcely withdraw their columns if they have only a communication to make from Adrianople."

"Ah! I suspect Achmet," said Moukhtar for sole reply.

"See, our line slackens fire also," continued the aide-de-camp; and their first line takes cover. The party with the white flag must be advancing by that dip in the ground."

"Give the order to cease firing generally, but let every gun and every rifle be loaded and every bayonet fixed. Send the engineers to the mines, and let the bearer of the white flag be blindfolded. Meet him yourself, good Osman, and bring him hither. Let no communication pass save with yourself till he is here. His party must remain beyond the lines . . . Ha, Monsieur de Fleet, my old comrade in starvation and fighting, you are in time to see the end of a tragedy—or a farce."

"I have hurried up from your quarters, Excellency," said the correspondent, "expecting an attack this morning, but your good camp-commandant was unwilling I should expose myself at the front; and I had to give him the slip. I have therefore been delayed till I have lost the beginning. But tell me, Mushir, why the firing has already ceased, and why you have not that elation I have so often seen in battle on your face?"

"Ah, De Fleet, I fear we are betrayed. Having opened the ball, they stop the music and send me a white flag."

"A white flag! What can it mean—and betrayed, you say, betrayed by whom?"

"Not this time by a drunken ferik, but I fear by a civilian, Achmet Pacha."

"Ha! the Commissioner?"

"Even so: I fear I know not what."

"These works could never be taken! And, Excellency, I passed two brigades of reinforcements on my way up."

"Alas! perhaps too late; the works can never be taken, but what if they are surrendered? See! here comes Cousin Osman, conducting the bearer of the flag of truce."

He came, that brave young Russian, who was first over the parapet at Plevna, as calm as though he were going to risk an imperial at *rouge et noir*, though surrounded by a guard with fixed bayonets.

"You are in the presence of his Excellency," said Osman.

"I have the honour to address his Excellency Ghazi Moukhtar Pacha, commanding the Ottoman forces?" queried Paskewitch.

"I am Moukhtar Pacha; what is your wish?"

"Light, Excellency."

"It is but usual, yet so much depends upon a skilled eye seeing no more than is necessary that—"

"Your Excellency need not be afraid of anything I can see or say, for here" (and he drew a paper from his breast) "is a plan of your works in detail, forwarded to General Skobeleff from Adrianople."

"I feared the worst, sir. Osman, remove the bandage. And now, sir?"

"I have the orders of General Skobeleff, Excellency, to express to you, as from one soldier to another, his profound respect and deepest sympathy."

"Sympathy, sir? This is trifling."

"General Skobeleff, Marshal, is before all things desirous you should understand he, as much as yourself, doubtless, regrets that the day is not to be decided by the fortune of war on the occasion of your first meeting in the field."

"Ah, yes; *he* is a brave soldier—but your message, sir, your message!"

"By the orders of General Skobeleff, Marshal, I demand the surrender of these works without the firing of another shot. One more shot, and your Excellency will be held personally responsible!"

"By whom, pray?"

"Marshal, an armistice was concluded at Adrianople at midnight by the Commissioner of his Majesty the Sultan."

"Ha! then you come to announce to me a deep-laid Muscov

plot, and that I am to throw open, on your mere word, the road to Stamboul for the Russians?"

"Excellency! General Skobeleff is well aware that this cannot be within your knowledge, or you would not have opened fire. Indeed when he began his movement this morning he was not himself aware of it."

"Will you please to recount the terms of the surrender?"

"That you evacuate these works immediately, leaving in them your heavy artillery; that a neutral zone be established; your ships of war withdrawn from our flanks to the Bosphorus; and that your Excellency forthwith nominates commissioners to fix the limits of the neutral zone."

"Ah, old comrade," said the Mushir to the correspondent by his side, "this is cruel, cruel, cruel! Even worse than I conceived. Stamboul will be then at their mercy, the mercy of northern wolves. . . . You have evidence of this?" he added to Paskevitch.

"General Skobeleff, Excellency, has received these orders by telegraph from his Imperial Highness."

"But I am not under your Grand Duke's orders—not yet!"

"General Skobeleff is willing that you should refer to your sovereign, and for that purpose to grant a delay of an hour in which you may telegraph."

"Be it so: if in one hour I have no instructions, I will announce my intention to defend these lines by one gun from this redoubt. If the works are to be surrendered, I will haul down the flag on yonder staff. Farewell, sir."

"Shall I blindfold him, Excellency?" asked Osman.

"Nay, Osman, it hardly matters now. Sir, will you have a cigarette?" And then Paskevitch and Osman retired together.

"Ah, my dear De Fleet," continued the Mushir, "I could not be deceived in Achmet Pacha. I read traitor in the furtive glances of his eye, and saw perfidy in the twitching muscles of his face." Then he took out his tablets and wrote.

"Send this telegram, De Fleet, both to the Seraskierate and to his Majesty. In one hour we shall know all. One hour! One poor hour! Thus, thus to be betrayed when I could beat back these Russian hordes as yonder rocks have defied for centuries the heaviest waves of the Euxine. Were every Russian south of the Danube multiplied by a dozen, they should not pass these lines! But Osman returns! There can be no answer yet, surely?"

"Your Excellency, all is lost," said Osman.

Moukhtar took a paper from his cousin's hand, and reading it, sighed,—

"All is indeed lost!"

"All is lost," put in the correspondent, "except honour, your honour."

"Speak not of my honour!" cried the Mushir; "think of my betrayed country. Betrayed! And by a civilian who was born a traitor. Better the midwife had strangled him. Betrayed! Haul down that flag!"

* * * * * * *

On the low rolling hills to the east of San Stefano, on the most memorable day but one in the year 1878, were to be seen in one group General Skobeleff, two English officers in mufti, Lieut. now Capt. Greene, McGahan, De Fleet, Osman Bey, and Captain Paskevitch, with, to the westward, the Imperial Guard in column, and to the east again the 4th Russian Army Corps.

"Well, but what could Melikoff have been thinking of," said Skobeleff to De Fleet, "to allow Moukhtar thus to circumvent him?"

"General, if it is a conundrum, I give it up," answered the correspondent; "I was not in the secrets of Russian generals then."

"And of what Russian general's secrets are you now master?"

"If I did not know that your frankness always covers profound strategy, I should say yours, General Skobeleff."

"What, I crafty? Do you hear that, McGahan? I who have always been so above-board with you."

"Always, General," assented McGahan, "especially when I had to support your reports."

"And yet you have often told me not to wear my heart so much upon my sleeve. But, my dear De Fleet, when did I deceive you in the month we have been acquainted?"

"You have never deceived me, General. The proverbial grain of salt has ever been present where your Excellency has confided in a Turcophile like myself."

"He means to say," bluntly put in McGahan, "that he never listened to more than one-half of what you said, and did not always credit that."

"I have not found in Moukhtar's friend any inability to express what he means," was the General's response, with some frigidity.

"Oh, I am again sat upon, crushed; but I will have my revenge when I write my great history of the war, and can tell the world to whose advice General Skobeleff owed all his victories," laughed McGahan.

"Dear Mr. de Fleet," said the General, "perhaps you do not know what a farceur your confrère is."

"And what a gallant model your confrère follows in that respect, dear De Fleet."

"I have no doubt," the latter replied, "that if the truth were known, it was McGahan who won all the victories, and General Skobeleff who wrote the accounts of them. But here comes the invaluable Pat."

"Well, Pat, any news?" asked Skobeleff.

"Iv ye plaze, Gineral, I thought ye'd like to know that they're goin' to dhraw swoords on one another beyant there, they can't agree."

"Then we shall have time to have some luncheon," said Skobeleff.

"But," answered Pat, "look, Gineral! there's a stir down there by the shore. And that's a cheer! Shure the pace is signed. See, the Gran' Duke raises his cap and spakes to his officers. Look, the men take off cap and hilmet and raise them on their bagginets and throw them into the air. Why, the cheer is taken up along the lines, and there goes the gun that comminces the salute, and now your min, Gineral, catch up the cheer, an' . . ."

"Osman Effendi," said Skobeleff, with tears running down his fair and manly cheeks, and forming pearls on his blond whiskers, "I pray you, on behalf of your gallant General, to give me your hand. We are friends once more, we, servants of the Emperor and the Sultan. The fight is over, and we have learnt to respect each other. De Fleet, when you return to Stamboul, will you assure Moukhtar Pacha of my profound respect? I feel more humiliation at the shame which a civilian official has endeavoured to put upon him than I feel satisfaction at the close of our campaign. It is the chief desire of my life, at this moment, to assure him that he has been badly treated, but not by Russian soldiers, and that such men as he is may yet be the salvation of Turkey." Here he turned to the English officers: "Gentlemen, you also, who have served with Moukhtar Pacha, pray confirm to him what I have said, and what I say from my heart. Pat, some champagne as soon as it can be brought."

"Deed and shure I thought your honner would be wantin' some iv that same dhrink, and so I brought all there was lift."

"Gentlemen all," cried Skobeleff, "I drink to the friendship of Russia, Turkey, and England, a natural triple alliance. Osman Effendi, I drink to the health of Moukhtar Pacha. McGahan and De Fleet, Captain Sword drinks to the health of his best friend, Captain Pen. Now, gentlemen, welcome when you will to the headquarters of the Fourth Army Corps, and to my tent or my home, wherever I may be. After all, however, our success has a bitter drop in it. Bulgaria is freed, but for that matter, had I known how ungrateful the Bulgars are, I would never have wet my foot in the Danube. And we have not Constantinople! Yet the time will come. The prize will fall into another's hands. It was not for me—not for me, mother darling! not for me!"

And the dashing leader covered his once more teeming eyes with his thin brown hand.

Presently they got talking about Jim Payne, of the Lancers, whose name had been in the Gazette a week before. "He was a nice young fellow," the one they called Archie said. "Don't you remember, George, he was gallopper to Baker in the Salisbury manœuvres; he got among a betting lot, I hear, and has gone to awful grief." If there was one point about these men that disgusted me more than another, it was the way in which they pretended to know pretty near every man in the Army. You could not mention a name but they were all ready to swear that they knew him. One fellow would have dined at mess with him in India, another would have drunk whisky and water with him in his tent at the Cape, or in India, or somewhere, and the third would have run against him at Aldershot, or at one of the Autumn manœuvres. However, they were right enough about Jim Payne, for he happens to be a cousin of one of our fellows; and I have heard him say Jim was a deal too fond of cards. I would have laid a dinner that this would start one of them off with a story, and sure enough it did. "It is astonishing," he said, "what a lot of men in the Army come to grief over gambling in one form or another. I never knew but one man who really made a good thing out of it, and that was in a very curious way."

Turning the Tables.

THERE was no brighter young fellow in the Eighty—— than Tony Russell. Russell wasn't his name, but, as he is alive now, and high on the list of retired Lieutenant-generals, it is just as well not to mention what his right name was, as he mightn't like the story he told me one night, when I was sitting in his tent after he had come off duty in the trenches before Sebastopol, being generally known. His father a clergyman, managed to send Tony—who was an only son—to Harrow, and had purchased his commission; but that was almost all he could do for him, and when he was starting to join his regiment, he gave him his blessing, and told him that he must shift for himself in future, for that he had had all he could spare him, and that henceforth all the savings he could make would go to the girls. So if Tony got into a scrape, he must get out of it as best he could, for there would be no use whatever in sending tradesmen's bills to the parsonage, as not a penny would be forthcoming to pay them. Tony was quite content; he had set his mind on being a soldier, and knew that his father had had no little difficulty in finding the money for his education, and for the price of the commission, and that the whole family had been pinched pretty closely for some years, in order that the necessary funds should be forthcoming.

So he promised with the sincere intention of keeping his word, that he would live on his pay. He tried hard to do so, and succeeded better than most men; but it is a difficult thing to manage, especially when one is a popular man in the regiment, and that Tony soon became. He was full of fun and high spirits, had learnt to play cricket at Harrow if he had learnt nothing else, and was the mainstay of the regimental team. He could sing a capital song, and was ready to take his full share of any fun that was going on. So, though he was really economical, took his cup of tea and his roll and butter for breakfast in his own quarters, instead of going to the mess-room, lunched on bread and cheese and a glass of beer, and always turned down his wine-glass when the duke's allowance of wine was exhausted after mess, he found it hard to make ends meet, and while he kept pretty straight in all other matters, his tailor's bills mounted up steadily.

He did full justice to the patience of this unfortunate man; but,

naturally, what with uniforms and mufti, the bills in the course of eight years amounted to a considerable total, and although Tony's monthly pay sufficed to meet all other demands, he had never, from the day he entered the regiment, been able to lay by anything towards paying off the steadily increasing amount against him. For the first four years the tailor had furnished the clothes without a question ; after that, the letters sent in with the accounts became first urgent, and then peremptory, and for the last two years there had been a complete cessation of supplies.

Had it not been that Tony had a pleasant manner, and every one liked him, matters would have proceeded to an extremity long before ; but he knew the value of personal intercourse, and had never shirked presenting himself before his creditor, always making a point, whenever he was in town, of dropping into the shop for a talk, and even tailors are but men, and have compunctions as to proceeding to extremities against a pleasant young fellow who has no nonsense about him. Mr. Cutters was convinced that Tony would pay if he could, but this conviction was scarcely enough to render the situation a satisfactory one. He would have been willing to wait still longer, had there been any definite prospect of payment ; but Tony himself was always ready to admit he could not specify any approximate date at which he would be likely to be in a position to discharge even a portion of his account.

"It's no use pressing me to name a time, Cutters, not the slightest in the world. When I once get my company, I shall be able to put something by and square up. It won't cost me more to live than it does now, and I shall get a good deal better pay, and will lay by regularly till I can settle with you."

"Yes, sir, I have no doubt you would, though gentlemen don't always, as far as I see, find themselves in funds, even when they get their companies ; but, you see, you are only half way up the list of lieutenants, and as you tell me that your name won't be down on the purchase list, it may be another five or six years before you get your company. Now, you see, sir, I have waited pretty nigh six years since you had those first goods of me, and I do think it's about time you gave me something on account."

"It's more than time, Cutters, I am well aware of that, but, you see, you are safe to get it sooner or later ; I don't owe a penny in the world except to you."

"Well, sir, I don't know that that is much consolation," Mr. Cutters said. "Don't you think, now, you might get a little money from a friend ?"

"I don't think about it at all, Cutters, I know I couldn't ; if I had a maiden aunt with money, I should have drawn upon her long ago, but I haven't."

"Well, sir, you see my account is 150*l.* now, and though I am sorry to refuse you, I must decline to comply with further orders till I get something on account."

This was two years before the outbreak of the war, and since that time, Tony had been forced to get what garments he absolutely required made by the regimental tailor. He could have borrowed money on his commission had he chosen, but in the first place, he had promised his father never to borrow money, and in the second, he knew that if he once began at that game, he should very soon find himself at the end of his tether. But Mr. Cutters knew that Tony had this resource behind him, and although he had taken no steps against him until the regiment was under orders for the East, he then issued a writ against him. Tony fortunately escaped service, had been smuggled on board the troop-ship at the last moment, and got safely off.

Naturally, as he had nothing but his pay to live on, and found that this hardly sufficed him, Tony had fallen in love, and had become engaged to a pretty cousin, who, although not absolutely impecunious, had but fifty pounds a year, the interest of a legacy from a grand-aunt. He was now fourth on the list of lieutenants, and in peace time, might have waited for some time for his step; but his prospects were greatly improved by the chances of death vacancies if the regiment went into action. Two days after the regiment landed at Gallipoli, the paymaster of the regiment shot himself. He had been a muddler, not often absolutely drunk, but generally upon the verge of it, and his accounts were found to be in extreme confusion.

The colonel offered the post to Tony until a fresh paymaster should be sent out from England, and Tony accepted it. Figures, however, were not in his line, he trusted to the sergeant, and the sergeant was a scamp. No doubt he had ruined Tony's predecessor, and the mess in which the accounts were when Tony took them up, rendered it easy for him to impose upon a young hand. Anyhow, after holding the post for two months, Tony, after spending two days of agony in balancing his accounts, found himself over a hundred pounds deficient. How it had come about he could not say, there were the long rows of figures which he had gone through a hundred times, there was the balance against him, but where the money had gone he had not the slightest idea. He had kept his cash carefully locked up, had vouchers for all his payments, and yet there was the deficiency.

Gallipoli swarmed with gambling-houses. Jews and Greeks had come down from Constantinople, fitted up and opened saloons, and did a thriving trade. Stringent orders had been issued that neither officers nor men should enter any of these houses; but orders are not always obeyed, and no inconsiderable number of British officers, both naval and military, had good reason to regret that in this case they had not observed them. Tony had once or twice, in company with other officers, paid a visit to one or other of these establishments, but he had never himself played, and had done his best to dissuade his friends from doing so.

"What is the use?" he would say. "Look at the swarm of ruffians who go there; if you won anything like a large sum, they would never let you get out of it, or if you did, you would never get to camp alive. Some of those fellows would stab a man for a pound, and though they might let you get off with a hundred francs or so, trusting that you would come again and lose double as much next time, you would never get off with anything like a pot of money. Besides, I am sure they don't play fair. I have noticed they always let you win at first, a good big sum, too, sometimes, but it all goes before you have done. You may say you can stop when you like, and go off with the money when you have won it, but you know very well you couldn't. There have been several rows of this sort already, and fellows have been hustled and robbed, and in one or two cases got some nasty knife-cuts before they got out. These scoundrels know well enough that it is against orders our being there, and that we dare not make a complaint."

After dismissing the first idea that occurred to him after making the discovery that he was deficient in his balancing, namely, that he would follow the example of his predecessor and blow out his brains, Tony half resolved to go to his colonel, make a clean breast of it, and ask for his advice.

There was still his commission to borrow on, but what would have been an easy transaction at home, was not possible here. It would take a month before he could write home to his agents and receive an answer; besides, this would practically double his liabilities, and there would be interest to pay. He had seen other men begin with small advances on their commissions, and be forced at last to leave the Army. This should certainly be his last resource. He was on the way to his colonel's quarters to lay the whole matter before him, when he stopped to speak to a couple of young officers who were comparing their experiences of the previous evening at the gambling-tables—one had won a hundred and fifty francs, the other had lost four hundred.

When he left them, instead of going on to the colonel's quarters, Tony sauntered back to his own tent. Should he try his luck at the tables before he gave matters up? He had the day before received his month's pay, and after settling his mess accounts, had three pounds in hand. It was not much to risk, but then he might have a run of good luck. Then his own counsels to others occurred to him. Even if he won, they would never let him go out with more than a few hundred francs, and that would be of no use to him. Still, surely it might be managed somehow. Fellows generally won at first, sometimes heavily. If he could but hit on some plan for leaving early, it might be managed. In the meantime he would not lose more. He knew that he had not been touching the regimental money, and that he had obtained vouchers for all he paid. The sergeant said that he had also taken vouchers for all payments' and he had paid away a great deal more than Tony had done himself.

Either there was some rascality or other, or the money had been taken from the chest. He therefore went across to the paymaster of the regiment encamped next to him, and laid the case before him.

"You know" he said, "that our last paymaster blew out his brains, and that his accounts were in a fearful muddle, and I believe that there was a very large deficiency. I think that he was as honest as the day, but he was always muddling himself with drink, and left pretty well everything to the sergeant. I have had the accounts for two months, and I expect before long a fresh man will come out and take them over. Now I know I have got vouchers for everything I have paid myself, but I have been balancing up, and find that there is a considerable deficiency, and I can't help suspecting that the sergeant is at the bottom of it, although how he has done it I know no more than Adam. I should be awfully obliged if you would spare an hour or two to look through the books, and tell me if you can see any way in which the money goes."

"I don't suppose an hour or two will be much good, but I will take them in hand," the paymaster, who was a Scotchman, said. "The accounts may be all right enough, and the money just have been taken from the chest. However, I will see about it, and in the meantime keep your own eyes open, count the money before you lock it up, and count again the first thing in the morning; but don't let the sergeant see you at it. When you go out in the day-time, do the same thing. You will soon find whether there is any deficiency; if there is, the next thing will be to prove who is the thief. I will come over after lunch to-morrow and look into the books."

Tony felt more comfortable after acting upon the advice given him; but the question of the debt already made weighed upon his mind. He again thought of the gambling-tables, and at last hit upon a scheme that promised to be successful; but to carry it into effect would, he saw, require a good deal more money than he had at his command. There was the chest, and there was money, but it was not his to take. For a long time he resisted the temptation, but at last yielded to it. "I am a hundred pounds short," he argued to himself. "It is clear I shall have to raise the money somehow to settle it, and I can raise two hundred pounds on my commission as well as one." This was not strictly the fact, for the commission of an officer going upon active service loses a considerable proportion of its value, for if he is killed, its value is lost to him and his heirs. Still it had been worth a thousand pounds before there was a talk of war; supposing it had lost half its value, or even two-thirds, he could still probably borrow a couple of hundred pounds on it.

He had promised never to borrow, but this was a case of necessity. The tailor's bill was nothing, but a deficiency in his accounts would mean ruin, and he determined that, at any rate, if at the worst he was forced to borrow, he would sell out as soon as the war was over, settle his liabilities, and go out to Australia or Canada.

It was a hard prospect for one whose heart was thoroughly in his profession; but he saw no way out of it, unless the plan he had formed should prove successful. There were not a hundred pounds in his chest at the time, and if there were, he could not take them without the fact being known to his serjeant; he therefore went to the divisional treasury and drew three hundred pounds. Of it he placed two hundred only in his chest, stowing the rest away in his trunk.

That evening he went to one of the gambling-houses where the play was often high. Taking with him ten pounds, in addition to what he had in his purse, he began by playing for small stakes. These he won, and continued increasing his stakes until he had three or four thousand francs before him. Then luck turned, and he rapidly lost the whole of it and the money he had with him. On the following night he lost twenty pounds; the next evening when he had won two thousand francs, he rose as if to go, but such angry exclamations broke out from the Greeks and Levantines who were standing round looking on, occasionally betting on their own account, that he sat down again and continued to play until his winnings and thirty pounds more were exhausted. On the following evening, before going to the gambling-house, he went round to the Provost Marshal's tent, and got into conversation with one of the sergeants.

"Are you on duty this evening?" he asked, after a few questions.

"No, sir. Two of the patrols have just left. Sergeant Brown here is just starting with another."

"Thank you, I want to say a word to him," and turning to Sergeant Brown, took him aside.

"Sergeant," he said, "I can put you in the way of earning a ten-pound note if you are disposed."

"I have no objection to that, sir, if it's in the way of duty."

"It is, sergeant. You know there are strict orders against any one entering these gambling-houses?"

The sergeant smiled.

"Yes, I know, sir, but I don't think, if I may say so, that they are obeyed, not to say strictly. Somehow or other we are not lucky in finding any one there when we enter."

"I don't think you enter very often, sergeant."

"Not very often, sir," and again the sergeant smiled slightly, for it was generally supposed that the keepers of these houses paid liberal fees to the provost-sergeants to keep their eyes discreetly closed.

"Well, sergeant, what I want is this: I have been horribly swindled in one of these dens—it is kept by a Greek named Zaptos."

"I know the place, sir."

"Well, I want to get square with them, and I will give you a

ten-pound note if you will come in punctually at half-past ten this evening, with two of your men, and arrest me for disobeying the orders. Never mind what I say, you insist on taking me out."

"All right, sir, I will do that readily enough, it's just a matter of duty."

"Be sure and be punctual to the time."

"I will be there, sir, never fear."

After leaving the sergeant, Tony proceeded to the gambling-house. He had made up a roll of paper to represent bank-notes, and put it in his pocket-book, wrapping round it the eight five-pound notes that still remained out of the hundred. On taking his seat at the table, he took out his pocket-book, drew two five-pound notes from the roll, and passed them across to the Greek who acted as croupier. As he did so, he noticed a significant glance exchanged between that worthy and some of the others;—they thought, as he intended they should think, that having lost sixty pounds on the three previous evenings, he had come in, determined to play heavily to recover them.

He began with great caution, only staking a pound at a time with varying success. After half an hour's play, he had lost ten pounds. He drew out twenty more, staked a five-pound note and won it, and then, as if excited at his success, went on increasing the stakes rapidly. As he had expected, he was now allowed to win, and as in addition to the advantages that their unfair play gave him, he had really a wonderful run of luck! in a short time a large pile of money accumulated before him. He glanced at his watch, it wanted but five minutes to the half-hour. He lost a heavy stake, and then, as if rendered a little cautious, put on one for half the amount, calling at the same time for another bottle of champagne.

Three times in succession he won; the croupier looked a little anxious, and an angry growl broke from three or four of the men standing behind Tony's chair, but he saw the croupier sign to them to be quiet, knowing perfectly well that in time, as the champagne did its work, he would win back not only the pile of money, but the roll of notes in the pocket-book. Suddenly there was a movement among the group around the table, and a moment later, the provost-sergeant with two of his men came up to Tony.

"I am sorry, sir," he said, saluting, "to have to do my duty, but you know the orders are strict against officers entering these places, and I must arrest you."

"Oh, nonsense, sergeant," Tony said, "that's ridiculous. You know very well it's constantly done, and no one is interfered with. Here, my man," and he held out four hundred-franc notes, "here are two hundred-franc notes for yourself, and a hundred for each of your men; now march away, and leave me to myself."

"I can't do that, sir," the sergeant said sternly, "and it will

be my duty to report your having attempted to bribe me to the provost major. You must come along, sir, at once."

Tony shrugged his shoulders, swept the pile of money and notes into his pockets, and stood up.

"You must put off your revenge until to-morrow," he said carelessly to the croupier.

The men placed themselves one on each side of him, the sergeant following closely behind. A hubbub of voices broke out, and knives were drawn. The croupier hesitated a moment. The loss was an extremely heavy one, but at the same time an attack upon a military guard was a serious affair. One man or even two might be put out of the way, but here were four, for the officer would doubtless support his guard if he were attacked. They were armed and prepared, and one or more would certainly be able to fight their way out and give the alarm; in that case the guard would be up in a minute or two, and even if he escaped serious punishment, the establishment would be broken up, and a business that had proved highly profitable summarily put a stop to; besides, no doubt the Englishman would return another day. Men seldom leave off playing when they are successful, and a few nights at most would see all the money back again. It was best to let them go quietly. So he waved his hand. The tumult subsided, and the provost-sergeant and his party made their way out in the open air. Several of the men came out and followed at a distance.

"You must take me into the guard-tent, sergeant. If I were to try and make my way back now to the regiment, I should get my throat cut long before I got there."

Accordingly they proceeded to the guard-tent.

"What will you do now, sir?" the sergeant asked as he entered after him.

"In the first place, sergeant, here are that four hundred francs I offered you in there. Keep that for yourself, and here are two hundred for each of your men. Now the only plan that I can see is for you to call your two men in. I will change my cloak for one of their great-coats and take his musket, then he shall remain here, and I will go with you and the others out on patrol. We can march about the streets for some time, and then go up to the camps. As we pass our tents, I can slip in. They will be watching the tent, and there is no fear of their following us. Of course you will put a sentry over the tent. I will send down my servant the first thing in the morning with your man's great coat and musket. Of course you will call off the sentry early in the morning and will make no report of having taken a prisoner. I daresay you will pick up a drunken man or two in the course of the night, and put them in the tent. At any rate, those Greeks need never know how it has been managed."

"Yes, I think it will work very well that way, sir. I fancy you must have done the Greeks pretty hotly."

"That I have, sergeant, I have won back what I lost and a good deal more. It's the scoundrel's game to let you win always at first; but they won't let you go out of the place with it. I thought that there was going to be a shindy, even with you three with me."

"I thought so at first, sir, but they knew better. If they had pitched into us, it would have cost some of them their lives; a score of them would have got five dozen a-piece in the morning, and the place would have been shut up. But I certainly thought for a moment we were in for a fight. Well I am glad you have paid them out in their own coin, sir. They do a lot of harm, those places, and I know five or six sergeants myself who have come to grief over them."

Tony's plan was carried out; in a few minutes he started as one of the sergeant's patrol, and an hour and a half later, slipped into his tent. As soon as he had struck a light, he emptied his pockets on to the bed, and found that he had won forty-two thousand francs, or over seventeen hundred pounds.

It need hardly be said that this was Tony Russell's first and last experience of gambling. The deficiency in his accounts was made up next morning. He then went over to the Divisional Paymaster, and handing him the rest, obtained an order, which he despatched to his agents at home, and by the same post sent off a cheque to his long-suffering tailor for the amount of his bill. The pay-sergeant was two days later detected in theft, and a large sum was found hidden in his tent. Some of the marked money was in it, and the amount Tony had paid in was replaced, and the sergeant tried and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and to be dismissed the army.

Soon afterwards, the army went up to Varna, and there the cholera very shortly created several vacancies above Tony; the Alma and Inkerman, and the long winter in the trenches still farther cleared away the list, and Tony was junior major of his regiment when he returned home at the end of the campaign. Two months later, I saw in the papers that he had married his cousin.

It was a clever move, wasn't it? and I have always said that Tony Russell was the one man I know who has been a really successful gambler.

Now I own this was a good story, and I consider that my putting it in shows that I only want to do the fair thing, because I might very well have left it out, and have chosen one of the others Lucy wrote down. There's no denying that was a story that might interest any fellow, and it was a first-rate dodge to do those Greeks. I made a note of it in my pocket-book the same night. It may come in useful if one is ever ordered on service in the East. Of course I said honestly that I did think that it was a good story, and then Lucy, to my surprise, said she did not consider that it was quite an honourable way of making money. I pointed out to her that if a fellow wants to leg you, and you can put him in a hole, it is perfectly legitimate to do so, and was the sort of thing every fellow would do if he had a chance, to which she replied, "I am afraid that the standard of turf morality differs from that among people in general. It does not seem to me that because a man wishes to cheat you, you are justified in cheating him. You are right to prevent yourself from being cheated, but that is an altogether different thing from cheating him." However, I am bound to say the other men rather took my part, and said that in dealing with knaves, it was necessary sometimes to fight them with their own weapons ; but Lucy was not, I could see, quite satisfied, and a minute later changed the subject by asking them if they were fond of yachting. What put the idea in her head I am sure I do not know ; but I foresaw at once what would come of it. You could not start a fresh subject but they were down upon it, and scarcely were the words out of her lips, when one of them said, "I heard rather a romantic story about the launch of a yacht a few seasons ago at Gosport. I thought at the time of working it up into a magazine story." I had no doubt, in my own mind, that he had worked it up, or he would never have told it in the way he did.

The Building of the Yacht.

"Is Miss Murray in?"

"No, sir, she's gone for a walk on Southsea Common."

"Has she been long gone out?"

"She said she would be back at five o'clock, sir."

Mary Jane did not give a direct answer to the question put to her. After the manner of British housemaids, she habitually either amplified or evaded. Not that there was the slightest reason for evasion in this case. She knew well enough that Alfred Grayling was paying his addresses to her young mistress, Miss Rose Murray, and paying them with the entire approbation of her master, John Murray, yacht-builder at Gosport, and burgess of Portsmouth. She did not think much of Mr. Alfred Grayling, this housemaid. "He has too much of a scowl for me," she would say to the cook or to the grocer's young man with whom she was "keeping company." Alfred Grayling did not care what Mary Jane thought. A word from him to John Murray would clear the house of one Mary Jane after another, as fast as the Registry Office could supply them.

"Well, I'll try and find her; if not, I'll come back about five."

He turned from Lion Terrace past the Cambridge Barracks and down the High Street of Portsmouth, which keeps in all respects, save the tramway, very much the same old-fashioned appearance which it presented when Captain Marryat was writing "Midshipman Easy" in the still unchanged George Hotel. When he got to the George, he found in its ample portal a friend who was the buck of the Hants Yeomanry Cavalry—Philip Stanton, the son of a dealer in ship's stores, but in dress and demeanour always affecting the young squire, with his tight trousers, his cut-away coat, his deer-stalker hat, his horseshoe pin, his tan gloves, generally his spurs, and always his hunting-crop day and night, winter and summer, some people said sleeping or waking. Phil Stanton had not "to work for a living," his father was wont to say proudly. "I'll make a gentleman of him. He can ride the best horse in Hampshire, and he can marry the prettiest girl too, if he's a mind to. I've got enough for both of them." Phil's education as a gentleman seemed to lead him much into the

company of flashy barmaids—not at the George, oh dear no, it was too staid a house for that, but lower down the street. Despite his commission in the Yeomany corps, it did not lead him to associate much with the better class folk of the neighbourhood. He was not wont to patronize the hunting-field, either with the Goodwood or the Hambledon pack, though once in a way he would show at a meet of the Petworths, and now and again he would join the harriers over the Downs, and in the weald beyond Portsdown Hill. But he was frequently equipped in all the panoply of the field in the mornings on Southsea Common, and the nursemaids would say to one another, or the children, "Why there, if there isn't Mr. Phil Stanton going out with the 'ounds again!" For the rest he was an amiable nonentity, fond of slapping his leg with his crop, talking to a barmaid, "standing a liquor," and generally cheaply earning the reputation of being a deuce of a fellow.

"Hello, Alfred; come and have something. I ain't seen you for a week."

"Don't mind if I do, Stanton, old boy; but it must not be at the bar, let's go in the smoking-room."

"What is it to be?"

"Oh, a whisky peg." As the officers in garrison called brandy and soda or whisky and soda a "peg," the word had naturally slipped into civilian speech in Portsmouth.

"I say, Alf, how's the running with Miss Murray, eh? I saw her going down past Governor's Green a while ago, with her Scotch terrier, and she blushed like a real rosebud when she met that aide-de-camp chap with his retriever, coming past the Naval Club. Is there anything in that quarter, hey? You know who I mean, that chap who's always about with the General—Trevor, I mean."

This was incoherent, perhaps; it was not grammatical; but it was clear enough in the main. Alfred Grayling took it very coolly. He said, "Every girl who is worth her salt likes a bit of flirtation, and if the chance comes with a soldier, or a sailor, or a parson, so much the better, she thinks. But Captain Trevor is not a marrying man, and Rose—Miss Murray—she knows better than to go against her father's wishes."

"Oh, I daresay. But she meets him nearly every day. Well not every day, but several times a week."

"That might be strange in London; it is hardly strange in Portsmouth; don't you meet everybody in High Street or on Southsea Pier, or Esplanade? Besides, the old man is going to build a yacht for Captain Trevor's half-brother the baronet, and the Captain is to look after it while it is on the stocks. Oh, Rose is a good girl, and has an eye to business as well as her father."

"What sort of a yacht?"

"The drawings are not down yet, they're expected this week;

something extra, I believe, in the way of speed. The baronet has a notion of trying for the Queen's Cup, and is going to challenge America for it. Well, it's a more sensible way of getting rid of your money than horse-racing—they do sail yachts for what they're worth. And as for the other, it's just robbery; robbery of the public by owners, robbery of the owners by trainers and jockeys, robbery of the jockeys by the bookmakers, and robbery of the bookmakers by the ballet-girls."

"How do you make all that out?"

"Never mind how I make it out, it is so. Here and there a trainer or a jockey makes a pile, but did you ever hear of a gentleman winning money in the long run? No, there's too many with their hands in his pockets. But I must be off."

"Which way are you going?"

"To Southsea Pier."

"Ah ha! going to meet Miss Murray, eh? Well, I'll take a turn with you to the Common. I say, Grayling, old chap, how will the old boy cut up?"

"As she's an only child, she must get what he has, and he's been buying property these ten years, to my knowledge. Oh, she'll be all right."

"Well, she's pretty, but she's not my style; not dash enough; wouldn't look half so well in a dogcart on a Sunday, as Polly down there at the Ferry Inn."

"Look here, Stanton, I'll trouble you not to mention Miss Murray's name in the same sentence with your Pollies, and your Totties. Yes, I know you meant no harm, but it is not agreeable. By Jupiter, here she comes—is that Trevor with her? I never saw him out of uniform before. I thought this General objected to the staff being in mufti this side of Hilsea lines? Hang it, she seems to be enjoying herself."

"Well, Grayling, old man, I'll slope."

"Good-bye. . . . Good evening, Rose."

"Good evening, Alfred; by-the-way, do you know Captain Trevor. Mr. Grayling—Captain Trevor."

"They told me you were down here," said Grayling, with a proprietorial air, "so I came to meet you."

"Captain Trevor has been so kind as to escort me," was the reply, delivered as though one gentleman were escort enough, in her opinion, for a pretty girl. "And he has been telling me all about the yacht. The plans have come down, and work is to be begun at once. Papa will be so pleased, he has been longing to begin, for he wants to get her ready early in June. And I am to lay the first block of the keel, Captain Trevor has asked me. By the way, what is she to be called, Captain Trevor?"

"Oh, it's time enough to settle that. My brother does not say. But there is the band. Will you not come on the pier? There's an arrangement from Sullivan's new opera. Come and hear it."

"Miss Murray is expected home at five," said Grayling.

"What for? Who told you that?" cried Rose.

"Your maid told me."

"Oh, I said I'd be home at about five; but papa won't be home till after six, so there's no hurry. What, won't you come too? Well then—" this without waiting for an answer, "come in this evening and have some music."

It was his dismissal. He felt it even more by the manner, than from the words. He raised his hat, Captain Trevor did the same, Rose smiled and bowed, and passed the turnstile. Alfred Grayling said to himself as he turned on his heel,—

"Well, this must be stopped. I must speak to her to-night. She can't say no, when she knows her father wishes her to be my wife. What a fool I was not to get the engagement made before, and then she wouldn't walk with these captains, not if I knew it."

Rose Murray was a bright blonde, tall, of a beautiful figure, and a still more beautiful complexion. She was pretty, too, with a good forehead and refined features. A woman at once of intellect and of decision. It was a puzzle to many people where she got her good looks. Her father was of a north-country type, of massive build, and rather hard features. Her mother, so far as could be judged from an oil-painting that hung behind the door in the drawing-room in a heavy gilt frame, had been a commonplace and rather fat woman, fond of laces and jewellery, it would seem from her costume, and generally having the look of a housekeeper in a historic mansion. Rose bore no great resemblance to either parent, except that her mouth was firm like that of her father, whom she passionately loved, and that her forehead was of the same shape as her mother's had been. She was a very little girl when that mother had been lost to her. Then her father's sister had come to keep house for him, and a couple of years before the period of which we treat, she, too, had been carried to her rest. Rose, then sweet seventeen, had assumed charge, had persuaded her father to dine at seven instead of one, had made the whole house refined instead of dowdy, and bright instead of dull. She was very musical, and could handle a violin as well as a piano. She was rather clever at drawing, especially at drawing ships and water, and she could take her father's rough outlines and make for him a finished sketch better, he said, than anybody else in Portsmouth. The little backyard she had persuaded him to cover in with glass, and make it into a greenhouse, where she achieved wonders in the way of raising flowers, so that the rooms were seldom without a change of pots of delicate and often rare blossoms. And she did not forget that the way to make a man happy is to give him a good dinner, so if she did not cook it herself, she always planned it, and saw that it was as well served as it could be. It was near dinner-time when she returned. Captain Trevor saw her to her door.

He had bought her the music of the new opera as they came along, and had written on it in the shop, "Miss Murray, with kind regards of T. D. T." As they parted she said,—

"T. D. T.? What does T. D. stand for, Captain Trevor?"

"My name is Thomas Dudley Trevor, Miss Murray."

"I always did like the name Tom," she replied, and then she blushed, and, turning to the door, knocked a good deal longer than there seemed to be any need for. "Good-bye, Captain Trevor," she went on presently, "and thank you very much."

He raised his hat, and went off to Government House to dress for dinner. As he went, he thought over and over again,—

"Now what did she mean by 'Tom'? I expect she did not mean anything in particular. But she's a charming girl. Heigh-ho! I wonder is she engaged to that fellow Grayling? I fancy not, but still there's something." And then he lit an anteprandial cigarette, and walked rapidly on. As he got near the sentry at the gate of Government House, he said to himself as he threw away the end of the cigarette,—

"Imagine me marrying the daughter of a boat-builder! What would my lady mother say?"

At half past eight, Alfred Grayling joined John Murray after dinner, and broached to him his intention of proposing that night, saying he had a reason for it.

"All right, Alfred, my boy, you have my best wishes. You'll find her in the drawing-room. I'll give you half-an-hour while I have a smoke. But I won't wait longer, for I can't do without the witch's music."

When Alfred entered the drawing-room, he found Rose very pensive. It was a new thing to see her sedate and thoughtful, though he well knew she did a good deal of unostentatious thinking.

"Well, Rose, how did you like the bits from the new opera?" he began.

"Oh, it's delightful," and she got up and went to the piano.

"Rose, wait a moment. I want to say something to you. Rose, you know without my telling you that I love you, have loved you for years. I have your father's consent to ask you to be my wife. Will you, dear?"

"I used to think you loved me, Alfred," was the answer; "but for a long time I have wondered if it were so. You did not speak, and, and—"

"Darling, I did not wish to speak until I saw my way a little clearer in business. But now I can speak. You are the only woman I love in the world, or ever have loved."

"Well, you have not been very ardent about it, and I must take time to think."

"We shall not get to know one another better by waiting. Don't you love me a little bit, Rose."

"I like you very well, Alfred, but I must not decide without thinking."

"Tell me there is nobody else, dear."

"Alfred, you have no right to say anything like that to me! I will give you an answer soon." And she blushed deeply, and moved towards the piano. Sitting down at it, she opened a book and began to play. As she turned over the cover, he saw the writing on it, and caught the letters T. D. T.

"T. D. T.?" he muttered; "can T. be for Trevor?"

Before he could say anything more, John Murray entered.

"Well, you two weren't long in fixing it," he said, "and now give me some music, what's that you're playing? It's lively and tunesome."

Rose played on.

* * * * * * *

"Well, Alfred, now that you have arranged with Rose, what do you say to going into partnership with me, and succeeding me in the yard?" said John Murray the next noontide to Alfred Grayling, as they were looking at the men busily engaged in clearing the ways of the slip for the champion cutter that was to be.

"But I have not arranged with Rose."

"Why—what—how do you mean? Did not you ask her last night? I don't understand you."

"I did ask her last night. You know, sir, I love her very much, but perhaps I did not put enough fire into my words, perhaps I took the thing rather too coolly, and took too much for granted. I did not care to say either more or less than I meant, and . . ."

"She didn't refuse you?"

"No, oh, no; but she did not accept me. She put me off till 'a more convenient season,' as we heard in church last Sunday."

"What's the lass dreaming about?" said her father; "I'll never force her to marry a man she does not like, but she does like you, she has said so a dozen times to me; I don't understand it. But girls do like to be wooed, they don't like to be taken for granted, as you say. When did she promise an answer?"

"Oh, 'soon.'"

"I must talk to her. This will never do. It upsets all my plans. You are very steady for a young man, but your cousin will get your uncle's brewery, and I want my girl's husband to be in a business of his own, not making money for other people. You know nearly as much of this yard as I do myself, and you'd soon pick up the rest. Have you any idea where the hitch lies?"

"She told me I had not been very ardent about love-making, and she seemed a little piqued. Indeed, if I were not the judge in my own case I should say that she implied I have missed my chance."

"Do you mean that there's somebody else she has taken a fancy to?"

"Well, she's been a good bit about with Captain Trevor lately, meeting him, of course by accident, on Southsea Esplanade, and once they were a long time leaning over the old saluting-battery wall. They were on the esplanade and the pier yesterday, and he saw her home, and that music she was playing last night was given her by him, it is marked T. D. T., and I found the initials corresponded when I looked in Holbrook's *Official List* last night at the George."

"Captain Trevor? Well, Rose may look up to any man in the land, aye, if he was a duke, let alone a younger brother of a baronet, and he's a nice fellow, and a clever fellow; but I don't like it, Alfred, I don't always trust these swells. They may mean business, but they very often mean mischief, though I don't think that of Captain Trevor. And his family would object, I daresay. My daughter shall never go into any family that objects to her. I'll speak to her."

"I don't think I'd do that, if I were you. It might breed opposition. I don't think girls like to be disposed of by their parents. It's probable that she only wants me to be a little more attentive, but in the day-time I'm kept so much at the brewery that I can't get about with her."

"That's right, Alfred, stick to business, and business will stick to you."

"Well, I do stick to it; I'm not a teetotaler, but I don't drink, I don't bet, and if I have a game of billiards now and then, I don't care much about it. I can't see what there is against me, except that I don't talk about love like a play actor."

"I was reading the other day how some Frenchman said 'to talk of love is to make love, and perhaps it would be better to talk of love to her a little more."

"Well, sir, I'll try. Do you think I'd better come round in the evening pretty often?"

"Yes, come round, and though I like my evening's music, I'll try to leave you alone together a little more than I have done. But here comes Captain Trevor. Good morning, sir, we're getting ready for the yacht, you see. I like her design very much; you know my son-in-law that is to be, Mr. Alfred Grayling?"

Captain Trevor looked rather surprised, but he only said,—

"Yes, I like the lines very much, and, by the way, my brother writes me this morning that her name is to be the Eros."

"Eyross, what does that mean, captain?"

"Oh, Eros was the God of Love among the Greeks, and her figure-head is to be the god Eros holding a rosebud. But that will be carved in London, and you shall have it within a fortnight. Well, when do you lay her down?"

"On Monday, I think, sir; and, if you have no objection, my daughter wants to lay the first block of the keel.

"Objection! what could be more appropriate? Indeed I

ventured to ask her to do so the other day. And I hope Miss Rose will christen her too. My brother will be delighted, I'm sure.

Alfred Grayling watched him narrowly, but said nothing, and Captain Trevor was conscious of the steady gaze, but bore it unflinchingly, so that Miss Murray's *prétendu* could make nothing out of him. Then John Murray said,—

"My little girl will be greatly pleased. Somehow, she has taken more interest in this boat than in any other. Now, Captain Trevor, I want to talk to you about her."

Captain Trevor looked rather amused.

"Her?" he said, "Miss Murray?"

"No, the yacht I mean, of course," replied John Murray, laughing; but Alfred Grayling did not laugh, he scowled.

"I must get back to the brewery," he said, "good-day."

As he was leaving the yard for the floating bridge, he met his beloved.

"Ah!" said he, "your father has some news for you, that will please you. He's in the model-shop. And what will please you as well, perhaps, Captain Trevor is with him."

The girl flushed a little, but she quietly asked,—

"And why should that please me very much? Whatever happens, Alfred, don't be so absurd as to be jealous."

Grayling was thoroughly puzzled. Rose's flush was no deeper than she was entitled to have at his remark, even if Captain Trevor were nothing to her. And her reply was a sort of disclaimer of Trevor, he could not help thinking, perhaps because he wished to think it. But as he went away the demon of jealousy began to probe his heart, as if its power were involved by her mention of it. He was so absorbed that he had to be asked for his toll at the floating bridge, and his reverie was so deep when the bridge had reached "Point" that he had to be roused by a shout of,—

"Now, Mr. Grayling, sir, do you want to go back with us?"

All that afternoon he could not settle to business, and when the office closed, he took the shortest route to Southsea Pier.

Meanwhile Rose assisted at the conference in the model shop, and was immensely delighted with all she heard. Every suggestion that was made by her father or Captain Trevor she immediately transferred to paper, until the young officer, having before him the embodiment of each idea, could not help thinking how clever she was and how quick. John Murray was so much absorbed on the business which was not only to bring him money, but perhaps to crown his fame, that he saw little of the ardent looks of his patron, and of the lowered eyelids and deep blushes of his daughter. But he took care that she remained when Captain Trevor went off to duty. Presently she also went off, and went home.

After an hour or so she went down to Southsea. How very strange that she should meet Captain Trevor again! By this time he had parted with his uniform, and was in morning dress, so it was clear "duty" had not kept him long. I think duty that day was confined to luncheon with General Wallis. They took a turn together. The turn was a long stretch, and not on the pier. It led them away down past the monuments on the Esplanade, past the *Victory's* anchor, past the Corinthian Club-house, past the guns taken from various enemies, past Southsea Castle, on the path outside which formidable fortification they sat down for a while, looking at the small squadron lying at Spithead, looking at the sun brightening up the young foliage over on the Isle of Wight, looking at the leaping and dancing waves, but, most of all, looking furtively at each other, and feeling both confused and happy when caught at it. Then on over a more broken path, where politeness if not necessity suggested a little help from the gentleman to the lady, almost as far as they could go without leaving everybody quite behind them. What did they talk about? I'm sure I don't know. Nothing in particular possibly; probably a little about the *Eros*, nothing about themselves we may be sure. When Rose looked at her watch she found it was long past five o'clock, so instead of returning by the beach, they made their way across the Common, and so past the Pier Hotel and the Cross to Lion Terrace—the shortest way. It was also the way they could hardly have been expected to go. But jealousy is Argus-eyed. Alfred Grayling, lounging by Southsea Pier, caught a glimpse of them and then kept them in sight. He saw them walk along past Cambridge Barracks, he saw them part at Lion Terrace, he saw Captain Trevor go off to Government House after lighting his cigarette, and then he went on to John Murray's house and went in. He found Rose in the drawing-room, still in her beaded mantle and her coquettish hat.

"Rose," he said abruptly, "you have been out walking again with Captain Trevor."

She at once got up from the sofa. Nobody knew better than this maiden the improvement in her appearance when she was standing.

"Yes, Alfred, and what then?"

"I don't like it, and I won't have it."

"Alfred!"

"I shall tell your father about it, it is not right, it is not proper; you will compromise yourself, and . . ."

"Mr. Grayling, by what right do you speak thus to me? You have no such right, and now I will tell you that after this display you never will have. Oh, you needn't look so black at me. I would not trust my happiness to any man who can behave as you have done. Captain Trevor is a gentleman and a friend of papa's, and I shall not be rude to him when I see him merely to please you.

If you had not dilly-dallied, if you had got any right to find fault with me, your way of doing it would have been bad enough, but to speak to me as you have done is an outrage, and I wish you good-day."

"But, Rose, I have asked you to be my wife."

She turned at the door, and said,—

"You can spare yourself the trouble of repeating your offer, Mr. Grayling."

Alfred Grayling's face then and for long afterwards was not pleasant to look upon. Few people had ever seen him in a bad temper, but his disappointment raised a devil in his breast that looked out at his eyes and revealed the torturing fiend within. He was half startled at his own aspect as he caught his reflection in the pier-glass between the windows. Then he went out into the falling night. Heavy clouds were flying over the sky from the south-west, and the wind betokened a storm during the night as it swayed the branches of the young trees in the Soldiers' Recreation-ground, and whistled under the archway of the barracks. Reckless of his steps, he was unconsciously taking his way to the "George." His throat was parched, his frame aflame. He went on to the bar of the hotel and ordered a peg. He was drinking it at a gulp, when he heard John Murray behind him say,—

"Thirsty, Alfred? Well come up to dinner. After that, I'm going out for a while."

"I can't, sir," exclaimed Grayling; "I'll see you to-morrow." And with that he put down his shilling, and went off like a rocket. The yacht-builder stared at him, and after him, and said to himself,

"I never saw Alfred like that before."

Then he spoke a word on business to mine host, and continued his way to his home. At dinner he said to his daughter,—

"I met Alfred a while ago, deary, and he was greatly upset about something."

"Papa, he insulted me, and I never want to see him or hear his name again."

Then she explained what had happened, and at every word Murray looked more and more annoyed.

"But, Rose, I wish you to look over this. It was only because he is fond of you that he spoke so. And I want you two to come together. I want him to come into the business with me. It is getting too much for me, and I am not so young as I was, and must train somebody up to succeed me. Come, my daughter, you won't refuse your old loving father. I have set my heart on this match. Come and kiss me, and forget all about Alfred's crossness."

"Crossness, papa? He insulted me. He said I was compromising myself by being polite to Captain Trevor. And oh! when he spoke I saw what a wicked heart he had. His face was like a madman's. He frightened me. Oh! I would die sooner than marry a man who could look like that. No, papa, spare me,

spare me! I could not, I could not." And she came and knelt down by his side, and buried her face in her hands on his knee.

"Well, little girl, we must let things be for a while. He will apologize to you, and then you will please me, won't you?"

"No, papa; and you would not ask me if you had seen his face. Oh! what a bad look it had. No, dear, dear papa, anything but that, anything but that."

"Rose, I must ask you then for one promise. Don't go out walking with Captain Trevor any more."

"But if I meet him, papa, I must speak to him. Why, what has he done? What have I done? He is your friend, and now that you are building the yacht you will have to see him so often, and I can't be rude to him."

"At any rate, dear, he ought not to make love to you without my knowledge."

"But he hasn't. He has never said a word about it. Only we have met by chance, and he is so kind."

"Well, deary, don't for a few days go where you are likely to meet him, and we'll talk about this again. Give me some music. I was going to smoke a cigar with Fred Burton, thinking Alfred would be here to keep you company; but it is raining and blowing so hard, I'll just stay at home with my pet."

"Oh, dear papa, go out, I'll get your waterproof. I could not play to-night, I have such a headache. Go out, you dear old thing"—here she kissed him, and he could feel her hand and face were burning—"and I'll go to bed. Papa, I'll do anything you ask me, except marry Alfred Grayling." And she shuddered as she mentioned the name.

The next day, and the next, and the next, Grayling saw John Murray at the yard, and also called at Lion Terrace. Here Miss Murray was always "not at home."

When a week had passed, Rose met Captain Trevor in High Street. She was looking pale, and he inquired about her health, and rallied her on having abandoned her favourite promenade. They were together only a few minutes.

The day after that, John Murray received the following letter at the yard. It was in a woman's writing, apparently but evidently disguised:—

"MR. MURRAY,—Look well after your daughter. She will be the prey of a villain. She met him yesterday, and made an appointment with him.—A FRIEND."

The yacht-builder read this a second time, and folded it up carefully and put it away in his pocket-book, with a very grim countenance indeed. By the mid-day post he received another epistle in the same writing. The missive consisted of no more than—

"All the daughters of musick shall be brought low.—Ecclesiastes xii. 4.

"She was his only child. . . . Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low.—Judges xi. 35."

After being compared with its predecessor, this was laid away beside it, and John Murray's countenance grew yet more grim. But he went on about his work. An hour later an orderly brought him a note. It read :—

"Government House, 11 a.m.

"DEAR SIR,—Can you meet me at two o'clock, either here or at your house in Lion Terrace? My brother is very ill, and I must go to him by the first train after I can get leave. Pardon the trouble I give you, but I cannot possibly spare the time to go to Gosport. I shall take it that Lion Terrace will be more convenient for both of us.

"Yours truly,

"T D. TREVOR, Capt., A.D.C."

The first thought that occurred to John Murray, as he started to keep the appointment, was that probably work would have to be stopped on the yacht. It would be a disappointment, but no loss, for he had received with the order more than enough to cover expenditure up to the present point. His next thought was that if Trevor's brother died, that young officer might be very wealthy and a baronet, if he were not an uncle. In that case, the yacht would be built no doubt. When he got to Lion Terrace, he found Captain Trevor already there, and in the drawing-room with Rose.

"I came as quickly as I could. I'm not too late. Sorry to hear this. Hope he's not bad, captain." These words came out in puffs and jerks, for John Murray had been walking fast, not having found a tramcar ready.

"Oh, there was no hurry for a few minutes; but I'm afraid he's very ill. Though we are brothers of the half-blood only, we are much attached. But you will understand that the work on the yacht—don't go, Miss Murray. You must? Then adieu, and *au revoir*. The work on the yacht must be stopped till you hear from me. Probably it will be all right, certainly, so far as depends upon me. But this I could have written or telegraphed to you. What I wanted to see you about, was this. Here I have had two letters, evidently in a disguised hand, both bearing the Portsmouth post-mark of this morning."

And he showed the yacht-builder two letters similar in character to those Mr. Murray had received.

"Now I could not go away from Portsmouth, even for a few days, without seeing you, and . . ."

"Look here, captain, I've got two as well as you. Here they are," and he handed them to Trevor. "Now, captain, let me ask you, have you offended any woman in Portsmouth? It is not the writing, but there's something about this so mean and spiteful that I have thought it must come from a woman."

"No, Murray, no; I know no woman in Portsmouth who could have any motive for this. You will see it is evidently aimed at me and Miss Murray. Now the time has come to say to you that I admire your daughter very much. She would do honour to any society, and she is as good as she is beautiful. I have met her several times at Southsea in the afternoon, and we have gone on the pier together, and walked on the esplanade together; but I give you my word as an officer, and a gentleman, and a man of honour, that I have never told her how I admire her, or said one word which you were not welcome to hear. I thought it due to both of us to say as much frankly."

"Say no more, captain, say no more. Please leave these with me for the present. I'll ferret it out, depend on it. Good-bye, captain, I hope you'll have good news."

When Trevor had gone, John Murray asked for his daughter, She had gone shopping. "It is just as well," said he to himself. "I'll keep it from her. I hope she hasn't got any of these precious murderous stabs," and at the last two words he brought his hand down on the piano near which he stood, till the wires vibrated as they do in "The Battle of Prague." Then he put on his hat and went to Grayling's brewery. "If it's Alfred, I'll thrash him," was his resolve uttered to himself as he walked along. When he reached the brewery with its rumbling barrels, and its odour of fermenting malt, and its burly draymen, and its hissing steam, he turned into the counting-house, and met Alfred coming out.

"I want a word with you in private," he said. "Where shall we go?"

"Come into the store; I want to see you too. Look here what I got this morning. Depend upon it, there's some woman been watching that captain for some cause or other, or she wouldn't write like this,"—and he showed another of those anonymous warnings.

"There, sir, what do you think of that for a relish for breakfast? I found it when I came to start the hands this morning."

"Well, I am dashed," said Murray; "here are two I got to-day, and two the captain got. They're all in the same writing, but some of them were posted last night, and some this morning. Well, God help whoever has done it, when I find it out." And the big North-countryman clenched his fist and knit his brow, and strode away.

A week went over, and then came a letter from Captain Trevor to Murray. It told how Sir Henry Trevor had been thrown from a hansom cab, and that concussion of the brain had ensued, that he had died in his brother's arms, and that the writer was now Sir Thomas Trevor, and would be in Portsmouth in a few days. The work on the yacht was to be immediately resumed, and all diligence to be used in completing her even if the estimate were

exceeded. The letter concluded by asking Murray to convey the writer's kind regards to his daughter. The word had been written kindest, but the three last letters had been obliterated. Meanwhile Alfred Grayling had called in Lion Terrace one evening, and said to the yacht-builder that he had come to know his fate. So he went into the drawing-room alone.

"Rose," he said, "I have come to ask you for the answer you promised to me. I am mad with love for you, and I can stand it no longer. Will you be my wife, darling?"

"Alfred, I dare not. I could not marry a man whom I could not love. If I thought I could love you, I would ask you for time. But it would be no use, and the kindest thing for both of us is that you should think of me no more in that way. But we have been friends so long, let us be friends again."

And then she extended her shapely hand. But he would not take it. He rose from the chair on which he had been seated near her, and said,—

"Very well; I suppose it's that—captain who has cut me out. But I'll be even with both of you."

In a few days John Murray's friends began to elevate their eyebrows. One of Rose's old school-fellows crossed High Street to avoid her, and another turned off the Esplanade across the Common—a cut direct. At last Rose spoke to her father about it all at breakfast, and he could make nothing out of it, and went to his yard in a very bad humour. When noon came and the men were breaking off for their dinners, he was going into his office to eat his sandwiches and drink his glass of sherry and have his pipe, when he saw his oldest friend in Portsmouth coming through the gateway looking very glum. He shook hands with him, and they went in together.

"What's the matter, Fred?" said the yacht-builder. "I haven't seen you for a fortnight. Where have you been?"

"Oh, I've been in London, and at Brighton, and I wish I had stayed there rather than come down here to hear what I do hear. Well, there's no use in beating about the bush, I've come to say it, and I mean to say it, though I daresay you won't thank me when it's said. There's not a man in Portsmouth, or Portsea, or Landport, or Southsea, or in the Island, no, nor in Hampshire, would tell you but myself; but I said to my wife this morning, 'John Murray and I have been man and boy together these five-and-thirty years and more, and if it was my case I'd be obliged to him for telling me, if it cut me to the heart, and so I'll tell him.' 'You'd better not,' she said. And I said I would, and here I am to do it."

"Do what, tell what for God's sake?"

"Why, tell you that half the people in the place have had letters saying that gay young dog of an aide-de-camp of the General's is too intimate with your daughter."

"With my Rose? It's a lie, Fred Burton,—a damned lie! Who dares to say it?"

"Why, everybody. Now, don't be in a passion with me. I won't stand it. I come to tell you as I would have told you anything that it was right you should know any time these forty years nearly. If it's true, it's right you should know it; and if it's not true, it's all the more reason you should have a friend as is a friend to tell you of it."

They looked at each other fair and square in the face, those two old cronies, and then they put out their hands together and held one another fast.

"It's a lie, Fred; a black and malicious lie. I know all about it. My girl has no secrets from me. If I can trace this lie home where I suspect there'll be murder done, and you'll see your old friend in Winchester gaol. Come with me. You'll stand by me, Fred?"

"Ay, that I will, John."

The two chums crossed the harbour together, and finding, for a wonder, a fly by Portsmouth pier, they entered it.

"Grayling's brewery," cried Murray, and then relapsed into silence, which Burton respected. When they reached the brewery, John Murray strode in. He met the proprietor.

"Where's Alfred?" he exclaimed in a voice of thunder.

"Why, what's the matter?" said Mr. Grayling. "Alfred? he's gone on a holiday, he wasn't very well, and he went to London a few days ago, meaning to go somewhere in the north for a run. What's the matter, Murray?"

"Murder's the matter, if I get hold of him. He has been lying about my girl."

"About Miss Rose! Why, I thought he was sweet on her. He told me you wanted to take him into partnership when they were married."

John Murray vouchsafed no answer; he went back to the fly and took his seat.

"Be careful, John," said Burton.

"Oh, I'll be careful enough. Won't you get in? No? Coachman, drive back to where I took you."

It was the following morning that Murray received Sir Thomas Trevor's letter. He put the hands on the yacht again, and kept his own counsel. He said nothing, even to Rose, save that he advised her to stay indoors for a time. A fortnight later the aide-de-camp returned and resumed his duty. Early the next day he went over to Gosport, and saw the *Eros* had made more progress than he had expected. Already her shapely lines were beginning to appear. He went into the office. After a few words of congratulation upon the good work done, he said,—

"Well, Murray, I have had my trial, and you look as if you had one too. What is it? Nothing wrong with Miss Murray, I hope."

"No, captain—Sir Thomas I mean; she's well, but she's miserable, and so am I. Some wretch has been coupling her name with yours, and not to her advantage, nor yours either."

And then he opened his budget, and in tones of great indignation cried out that he did not see what could be done. The girl was a good girl; but her reputation had been poisoned, and there was nothing for it but to wait till the reptile returned if he ever did, and then he would be made to confess the lie if he had to be choked to get the avowal out of him.

"There is one thing that can be done," said the baronet with much coolness, and even an approach to a smile. "May I see Miss Murray?"

"Why, yes . . . in my presence," replied the yacht-builder, startled into suspicion.

"That might be awkward—for her," was the smiling answer. "But I have no objection. Suppose you are in the next room? I will call this evening then." And off the young man went, quite in a good humour.

"That's strange," said Murray.

Soon after nine o'clock that night the aide-de-camp in mess dress, with a band of crape on his left arm, reached Lion Terrace. He was shown into the drawing-room, where he found Rose watering some of her namesakes. To her surprise her father got up without a word, and went into the dining-room.

"Oh, Captain Trevor, I am so glad to see you. I was so sorry to hear of your loss. What a sad accident."

"Yes, it had only one redeeming quality—it seems selfish and unnatural to say so, but it made me a free man. I was a younger brother, with a very small allowance, and dependent upon my mother for my pecuniary prospects. Now that poor Hal's gone, I am my own master, and can please myself. I am going to do so. Dear Miss Murray, sweet Rose, do you think you could love me? Will you be my wife?"

"Your wife! Are you quite sure of what you are saying, Captain Trevor? You are a baronet now, and you should have a great lady for your wife. I shall always . . ."

"Be always mine. I want you not because I am a baronet, but because I love you, and have loved you for a long time."

"But I have not known you long."

"Then ever since I knew you, and you have grown to be so dear to me. Can you love me?"

She gave him no answer; but he read consent in her face, and clasped her in his arms just as her father entered. "I have your approval, Mr. Murray, have I not?"

"God bless you both," was all John Murray could say for a moment. "And now sit down, both of you, till I tell you something. Rose is only a yacht-builder's daughter, and yet in point of family you need not be ashamed of her. Forty years

ago a motherless lad was left fatherless. He did not like his stepmother, and she did not like him. The property he should have come in for had been ruined by racing and gambling. There was scarcely enough for the woman who was left and her young children. The lad found himself very unhappy, so, taking a few seals and papers belonging to his father, and a miniature of his mother, which he had long secretly cherished, he ran away, went out into the world, to seek his fortune with his horse and a few shillings in his pocket. After a while he sold the horse and with the money he went to London. There, when he had tried many times to find employment, he got work in a ship-building yard in Poplar. When he had learnt a little of the craft, he saved some money, and set up for himself in a small way. He got a name as a builder of good wherries, and one day he tendered for some boats that were wanted for the navy. He got the contract. In the course of business he had to come to Portsmouth. He saw his chance and he has been here for more than thirty years. But he has not lost his good blood even if he is only a boat-builder. Take his daughter, my son; she is of as good a family as your own, and better in heart than she is in blood. We are Murrays of Otterburn, some call it Chevy Chase, and if my great-grandfather had got over the attainder when he tried, we should be something more than country gentlemen. God bless you both!"

* * * * * * * *

Two months after that the *Eros* was to be launched. A whole heap of people came down from London and over from Cowes to see the sending off of the cutter that was going to be famous. The General was there and the Port Admiral and half the people in the naval and military directory. One might have thought it was a man-of-war that was to be put afloat, instead of an eighty-ton pleasure-vessel.

"She is a beautiful thing" said the admiral.

"There is nothing so handsome afloat," declared the master-shipwright.

"You have challenged for the American Cup, I think?" asked the General.

"Why, no," was his aide-de-camp's reply, "that was my poor brother's idea, and then he meant to give her to me whether she won or lost! But I shall not challenge with her. I mean to put her to a better use. I will pass my honeymoon in her. Rose, dearest and here he took her hand and placed it under his arm, "let me present you to my friends: ladies and gentlemen, Miss Murray, my betrothed."

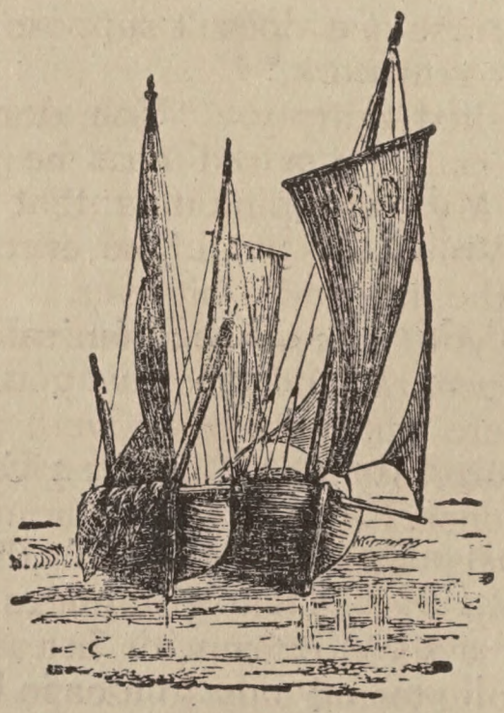
A moment later the tide served; the signal was given; the shores were knocked away; Rose broke a bottle of champagne on the figure-head, which somebody discovered to be a portrait of herself, called the yacht the *Eros*, and wished her good-luck. There

was a gentle sliding movement apparent in a moment, it quickened. The people on the platform and the slip cheered, the people in the boats took up the shouting, somebody let off some guns close by, and then there arose a wild shriek from hundreds of throats. A wherry containing one man beside the boatman was cut down by the stern of the yacht, and with much ado the boatman was rescued. But the passenger was missing.

"Who was he?" they cried to the boatman when he was brought ashore and had some brandy poured down his throat.

"Who was he? Why he was Mr. Alfred Grayling of the brewery, he was; he wanted to land before she was launched, though I warned him it was dangerous, but he would have it, and he was a cussing of the yacht furious like when he saw her move. Lord, how he did cuss her! And isn't he saved? Well, well, now that is a judgment sure*ly*."

The body was found by Block House Fort at low water, and in a pocket was a book containing the drafts of the letters he had sent to Rose and her father. It "was a judgment, surely."



"I think," Lucy said tossing her head a little. when the story was ended, "without knowing anything of the customs that prevail at Portsmouth, that the young woman behaved, to say the least of it, strangely. It is all nonsense to talk about accidental meetings, and for a young woman in her position of life to walk about with an officer day after day, was, I should think, fast even in a garrison town. As to the man, it seems to me that he is rather to be regarded as a madman than as a scoundrel, for of course there could be no difficulty in tracing the letters to him, even if he had not taken the precaution of keeping copies, and he laid himself open to be horsewhipped by the father, and prosecuted for libel by the young woman. Anyhow, I cannot regard Captain Trevor as being a fortunate young man." This snub put a stop to story-telling for some little time.

"By the way, I think you were down at Dover last year, were you not?" the man they called Charley said presently to me. "You were on Stevenson's Staff, I fancy?" I quite gave a start, for really this looked as if sometimes they did get near the truth; but of course I saw directly that Sir John or Lucy must have happened to mention it, at the Easter review. "Yes," I said, "I was there, but I don't remember seeing you." "I was not gorgeous in blue and gold," he said with a nasty sort of laugh, that struck me as being a deucid bit of impertinence; "what did you think of the Volunteers?" "I don't know that I thought much about them one way or other," I said; "it amuses them, don't you see, and doesn't do any harm. Of course one doesn't suppose that they would be any good if it came to real work."

"Why not?" he asked sharply. "You don't suppose, do you, that because a man puts on a red coat he gets any additional courage from that. My own opinion is that in real fighting, an average battalion of Volunteers would be every bit as good as an average battalion of the line, and a bit over.

"I quite agree with you," one of the others said. "They have drill enough, an excellent *morale*, and I believe you could trust them to stand where they were put until they were pretty nearly exterminated, and I am sure they would not be given to sudden panics. I quite grant the French Franc-Tireurs, whom I saw a good deal of in '70-71, were very little account, but then they had never previously worked together as our Volunteers have done. They had no confidence in their officers, or in each other, and lastly some of them had volunteered only to escape being called out to join the line, and others were shop-boys who went in for the sake of the fancy uniforms. It was just the same with the Garibaldians in 1866. I saw them at work, and I am bound to say that it was a sickening exhibition;" and then lighting his pipe afresh, he began the following dreary story.

Out with the Red-Shirts.

THE campaign in the Tyrol with the Garibaldians, was one of the most pleasant expeditions I have ever been engaged in. The scenery was lovely, the weather glorious, the temperature just the right thing—pleasant and warm during the day, a little sharp at night. The roads were good; I travelled in a carriage with two comrades who were all that could be desired as companions, and the Garibaldians themselves were as pleasant and cheery a set of fellows as ever carried knapsack. There were, of course, drawbacks, as there always will be. It was difficult to obtain lodgings of any kind, next to impossible to get food, and it was only by incessant foraging among out-of-the-way farmhouses, that one succeeded in getting eggs, and an occasional fowl to eat with the bread, which formed the staple of our food, and even this was sometimes only to be obtained by sending the carriage away ten or twelve miles to fetch it from villages that lay out of the way of the march of the all-devouring army.

There was no obtaining food from the Garibaldians, they had little enough for themselves, for the utmost energies of the Government were strained in supplying the regular army, and Garibaldi's force among the hills had to shift as best they could. Often the troops were twenty-four hours without even a crust of bread, and the men had only one thin blanket to protect them from the night dews and frost; but they took it all good temperedly, and nothing in the way of hardship and privation came amiss to them. As Wolfe, a German officer of Garibaldi's, one of those soldiers of fortune who are always to be found where fighting is going on, once said to me,—

"The Garibaldians have but one fault; were it not for that, they would make the best soldiers in the world. They are very quick and intelligent in picking up their drill, they can march long distances, they can stand cold and hunger. They are always cheerful and good tempered, they are very amenable to discipline. They have but one fault: they will not fight." But this was said later on. At the time we joined them, that little defect had not shown itself clearly. It was true that at Rocca d'Anfo, the frontier post at the Tyrol, they had behaved badly, being held in check by

a handful of Austrians. Here Garibaldi himself had been wounded while trying to get them to advance, wounded, it was whispered, by a shot from one of his own men, who were firing off their muskets at random.

However, allowances were made for this affair. It was their first engagement. They had believed that the Austrians would run away the instant they saw them, and were naturally disappointed at finding this not the case. Anyhow, it was thought that they would do better next time. They had been largely reinforced, and the Austrians had fallen back, and with light hearts the army had crossed the frontier, and had taken up a position on a hill called Mount Suello ; which lies on one side of the valley of the Idro ; the little river of that name ran along the Garibaldian side of the valley, and was crossed by a bridge at the village of Caffaro. On the other side of the plain, some three miles higher up, lay Storo, at the mouth of the pass. This was held by the Austrians.

The day after our arrival there, a column about a thousand strong was seen advancing along the road from Storo, the Garibaldian pickets beyond Caffaro falling back hastily as they approached. As the column approached the village, little puffs of smoke rose from behind hedges and trees, and from the houses of the village, and the reports were mingled with the louder cracks of the jager rifles of the company advancing in skirmishing order at the head of the column.

By this time three or four Garibaldian regiments were pouring down the hill towards the scene of action, but before they could reach it, the red shirts evacuated that part of the village beyond the river, and ran back across the bridge. As soon as the Austrians were in possession, five guns of the Royal Artillery opened from various points on the hill side, and the Austrians having doubtless fulfilled their mission of discovering whether the Garibaldians were there in force, fell back towards Storo. Half an hour later, five regiments crossed the river and marched upon Storo, which was found to be evacuated by the enemy, and by evening, some 10,000 men were bivouacked round the village.

There had been nothing particularly creditable in the skirmish ; but the Garibaldians were in high spirits. The Tedeschi had fled before them ; victory was assured ; terrible things would be done next time they met them. The village was a pretty one, and was charmingly situated. Close behind it the hills rose almost perpendicularly, while at the end of the street the road curved sharply and entered a narrow pass, in which, a mile beyond, stood a little fort guarding the passage. Beyond sending a picket up this road, no precautions whatever were taken ; indeed, that the Austrians might take the offensive was an idea too preposterous to be entertained for a moment.

One regiment was stationed in the village itself, piling their arms in the streets, and every house was soon filled by the officers of

Garibaldi's staff and those of the regiment. We thought ourselves lucky in obtaining possession of a loft stored with hay, which afforded us capital beds. Having seen to this important matter, we sallied out to the one inn in the village. This was crowded with soldiers, who had taken possession of the whole place. The host and hostess and two maids were at their wits' end. There was, they assured their clamorous visitors, no food whatever in the house, for the Austrians had devoured everything ; there was, however, plenty of wine. Casks were broached, and a non-commissioned officer or two taking charge of these, served out the wine and collected money, which they duly handed over to the host. Many of the men were cooking their rations by the fire, and having been lucky enough to obtain a dozen eggs and some bread that morning, I succeeded, after some search, in finding a frying-pan, and manufacturing an omelette.

Hunger appeased, we went out into the village again. It was an amusing scene, the street was blocked with guns, baggage-waggons and vehicles of all kinds ; the Garibaldians in their red shirts and blue grey knickerbockers pervaded the whole place, leaning out of all the windows, talking and shouting to their friends in the street below, and chatting with the women, who stood at their doors bewildered at this sudden eruption, but doing their utmost to appear pleased at the arrival of those who called themselves their deliverers. At heart, however, I had no difficulty in discovering, when talking quietly with them, that the inhabitants of the villages on the Austrian side of the frontier of the Tyrol were by no means so desirous of emancipation from what the Italians called the Austrian yoke, as they were represented to be.

They had not been heavily taxed, and had, as far as they knew, no complaint to make against the Austrians. Moreover, and this went for much, the simple peasants were all good Catholics, and had evidently been taught by their priests to regard the Garibaldians as a host of free-thinkers, who feared neither God nor devil. These opinions, however, naturally found no expression before the Garibaldians, and indeed there was clearly a feeling of relief that the new-comers behaved themselves quietly and decently, and that, beyond quartering themselves as thickly as could be among the various houses, they made themselves in no way obnoxious, and respected alike the virtue of the women, and the property of the householders.

The Garibaldian regiments had with them Vivandières, volunteers like themselves, and many of these girls had brothers or lovers in the regiments with which they marched. I came upon a couple standing a little apart from the crowd in a quiet corner. I had noticed the girl on the previous day's march, for she was an exception to the general rule, which was that the Vivandières, although decidedly picturesque, were generally by no means pretty. The girl in question was, however, distinctly so, and as she marched at

the head of the regiment with three or four companions, I had observed none of the jaunty, and to say the truth, somewhat brazen air which distinguished the greater part of these young females. The young fellow talking to her was evidently her lover.

"It was unlucky, Theresa," he was saying, "that our regiment was not in front to-day. We should not have hesitated, we should have gone right at them with the bayonet, and, you know, the Austrians cannot stand the bayonet."

"So they say, Carlo; to-morrow we shall see; but you must not be too brave, you know. Of course you are brave, I know that, but you must not be rash. You must fight with the rest, but do not let your courage carry you away. I know how you hate the Tedeschi, and so do I, and so do we all, but do not throw away your life."

"I will try, for your sake, to be calm, Theresa; but I must do my duty, you know."

"Of course, dear; only you must not be too brave. We must all give our lives for Italy, if needs be, but I shall be unhappy if you do not promise not to do anything rash."

"I promise, Theresa," he said with the air of a man making a great sacrifice, "I will restrain myself."

He was a well-built, pleasant-looking young fellow, belonging, I should say, to the tradesmen class, and had doubtless given up his place behind a counter to carry a gun behind Garibaldi. A large proportion of the Garibaldians belonged to this class; they had joined, perhaps, in the first place, because by so doing, they escaped the risk of being called upon to swell the ranks of the regular army. In the second, because the force of public opinion, and especially the opinion of their sweethearts and female friends, was so strong, that they could not decently remain behind when the youth of Italy were going out to drive the hated Austrian from their country. And in the last place they had joined because they believed honestly that the enemy would never stand against the red shirts of Garibaldi. It was a picnic rather than a war that they were going to take part in, and after it was over, they would return covered with glory as distinguished members of Garibaldi's resistless army.

After Rocca d'Anfo, I do not think Garibaldi himself cherished any illusions respecting the character of the force under his command. Very different men were these to the determined band of political exiles who gathered round him at Messina, men who, for the most part, fought with halters round their necks, and were perfectly willing to give their lives for what they regarded as a sacred cause. He suffered much from the wound he had received in the first fight, and was unable to mount a horse. The responsibility of his position as General of an army of some 30,000 men weighed upon him, for although a gallant soldier, Garibaldi was no organizer, and although he was incessantly at work, his staff was a most inefficient one, and his face constantly bore a harassed and anxious expression.

He had several well-meaning ladies about him, who pestered him with their constant attentions, and one of the staff told me that while he was lying ill from his wound, he raised himself in his bed after a long visit from one of these ladies, and said piteously, "Who will deliver me from Mrs. C——?" Fortunately this exclamation was not taken by those standing round in the same spirit in which a similar remark concerning A'Becket was received by the knights of King Henry II., and the good lady continued her ministrations to the end of the campaign in the serene belief that she was Garibaldi's guardian, protector, and good angel.

For six days we remained at Storo. There was a sharp skirmish with a body of Austrians who pushed a reconnaissance down from the head of the valley of Idro, but no forward move was made up the pass. Every day added to our strength, until some 25,000 men were gathered round Storo. Things were getting monotonous when one morning, as we were at breakfast, we were startled by a musketry fire apparently close at hand, the outbreak being accompanied by a babel of shouts and screams, in the street outside. We ran out to see what was the matter. Storo was in a state of the wildest confusion.

The Garibaldians were running here and there, officers were shouting, women rushing out of their houses to snatch up their children and drag them into shelter, horses were kicking, and teamsters swearing. Still the fire of musketry was going on, and looking up at the top of the rock some five hundred feet above us, we saw a party of Austrians calmly directing their fire into the village. Some houses were hit, some tiles broken, and a good many pieces of plaister chipped off walls; but in a wonderfully short time the streets were deserted, and no one was wounded.

In ten minutes, the men belonging to a battery a few hundred yards out in the plain had dug holes for the trails of their guns, so as to give them sufficient elevation, and shell after shell was sent up against the party who had so rudely disturbed our tranquillity, and these having no doubt greatly enjoyed their diversion, presently disappeared. It spoke volumes for the incapacity of Garibaldi's staff, that during the six days of our stay at the village, no attempt had been made to occupy a position which so completely commanded us, and which was open to the Austrians from their fort at Ampola, scarce a mile up the pass.

Steps were now taken not only to prevent a recurrence of the attack, but to utilize the height. A strong body of Garibaldians made their way up a path, which seemed practicable only for goats, to the top, and with enormous labour, dragged, by means of ropes, half-a-dozen field-guns and their carriages after them. On the following day, the attack on the fort began, and we climbed to the top of the hill, and from here had a fine view down into the

valley behind, up which the road we had to follow passed. It was narrow and winding, with only sufficient space between the foot of the hills for the road and a little river that ran beside it.

At the apparent end of this defile it widened a little, and here stood the tiny fort of Ampola. Looking from the distance at which we were, which was about a mile and a quarter, the fort might have been an ordinary dwelling-house, the two embrasures having the appearance of windows in the upper storey. A glass showed a row of loopholes in the storey below. Above the fort the black and yellow Austrian flag waved defiantly ; but small as the place was, it had sufficed to stop an army of over 20,000 men from advancing into the Tyrol for nearly a week. Its strength consisted in its position ; for except from the heights, at a distance so great that the only cannon that could be conveyed were almost useless against its solid masonry, no guns could be brought to bear upon it. Nor could they be placed in the road, except close under its fire, as, owing to a bend in the defile, the fort could not be seen until approached within a distance of three hundred yards.

The scene was a most picturesque one, the wild mountain, the narrow valley and nine guns at different points on the heights playing on the little fort, with its Austrian banner. The light smoke curled up from the batteries or hung upon the mountain side, like morning mists clearing off from the valley. In the brushwood, which covered the steep side of the defile near the fort, were stationed a number of Garibaldian Bersagliere. They kept up a constant fusilade upon the embrasures of the fort. To them the Austrians replied through the loop-holes ; but the two guns answered but seldom, as it would be needlessly exposing the lives of the artillerymen to have worked them, and they could not have carried with any degree of accuracy to the heights upon which the Italian artillery were placed.

The noise was prodigious, for the mountains echoed and re-echoed the roar of the artillery in a prolonged roll like a peel of thunder, and the dropping fire of muskets filled up any interval that might occur. The practice of the guns was exceedingly good, but it appeared to have but little effect upon the fort—the long percussion shells of the twelve-pounders simply bursting like glass bottles against its solid masonry.

For three days the bombardment continued. The delay was annoying, but it was the occasion of an incident that gave us a hearty laugh. On the morning that the bombardment commenced, a regiment started across the mountains with the intention of making a détour, and coming down on the road some miles in the rear of the fort. They lost their way, and for three days marched about among the mountains, subsisting solely upon some cattle they found grazing there, and brought down by their rifles. At the end of that time, they found themselves, to their astonishment, at the edge of a precipice, looking down upon Lago d'Idro, some twelve

miles down the valley, having gone in exactly the opposite direction to that which they had intended.

On the morning of the fourth day, the little Austrian garrison surrendered. They were but 200 strong, and had only lost one man during the siege, but had had some twenty more or less seriously wounded. They had surrendered, not because the place had become untenable, for it was still practically uninjured, but because the men, many of whom were Venetians, had become discontented and mutinous, breaking into the wine-cellars and helping themselves until they were nearly drunk. The orders of the officer commanding were, that he was to hold the fort for six days, at the end of which time he would certainly be relieved; but the conduct of the men had prevented his carrying out his instructions, which he could otherwise have done without difficulty.

We found that one of the two guns had been rendered useless upon the first day of the bombardment, its muzzle having been knocked off by a shell. The Austrians, however, had fired the other alternately from the two embrasures, so that the misfortune was not discovered until we took possession of the place. The Garibaldians exhibited a childish delight at their success, firing guns, cheering, and indulging in all sorts of demonstrations, as if the capture of a tiny fort with one gun, by an army nearly 30,000 strong, with forty field-pieces, was a feat almost unapproached in history.

In the afternoon, some 15,000 men marched up the valley to the village of Triano de Sopra. We started early next morning. Soon after passing the fort of Ampola, we reached the head of the valley, from which point the water flows eastward into the Lago di Garda. When we had gone about five miles, we heard the distant boom of guns, and could distinguish a continued rattle of musketry. Presently we met an artillery officer riding at full speed. He was on his way to fetch up a battery of six guns we had passed on the road a mile back. Ten miles from Storo we reached the village of Triano, and as we entered it, witnessed an extraordinary scene. First two peasants rode by shouting something, then at full speed three or four artillery waggons came thundering past.

In an instant the Garibaldians, with whom the valley was crowded, and who were sitting about everywhere, seized their muskets, and caught up their kits, and made a headlong rush to the rear as fast as their legs could carry them. Women caught up their children and fled into the houses. Carters turned their horses' heads, and jumping up, lashed them into a gallop.

"The Austrians are coming! The Austrians are coming!" was the shout. As, however, the firing was at least a mile away, and there were fully 10,000 men between us, it was evident that the alarm was a false one. In the course of five minutes, the officers with drawn swords, loud shouts, and much gesticulation, succeeded in arresting the course of their men. A few minutes later,

a mounted officer dashed from the village and ordered every man instantly to the front.

We left our carriage here, and walked on. The confusion was tremendous; the wounded were coming in thickly, many of them escorted by a most unnecessary number of their comrades, who were, however, sent back at once to the front by the mounted guides, who rode about sending every loiterer forward, or rather trying to do so, for many of them lay down behind the hedges or in the vineyards, and some were so completely unmanned, that they were crying like children.

As we pushed on through the wounded and stragglers, I heard a woman's voice, and looking through the hedge, saw a Vivandière standing by a man who was sitting on the ground with his musket beside him, his hands over his face. I recognized them at once. It was the couple I had seen together in the streets of Storo. She was standing looking down upon the man with an expression of bitter scorn.

"You coward!" she exclaimed. "You wretched coward! and it was you who were going to restrain your courage for my sake! You coward! I would rather a thousand times have seen you lying dead on the field. Never let me see you again. Go back to your shop and measure out your ribbons, it's all you are fit for. Never speak to me again or look at me; I am ashamed of myself that I should ever have loved one who isn't even a man."

So saying, she turned abruptly, passed through a gap in the hedge, and went forward towards the front. A moment later a guide dashed through the vineyard, and striking the wretched lad with the flat of his sword, forced him to get up and return towards his regiment at the front. A little further on, I reached a point where I could see the battlefield.

At daybreak, the 5th Regiment, 4000 strong, had advanced into the village of Bezzecca, which lay half a mile in front of me. Finding it unoccupied by the enemy, they advanced, and that so carelessly, that they did not even take the precaution of sending out skirmishers ahead. They had nearly reached the next village, when a heavy column of Austrians issued from a wood upon their flank, and would have cut them off had they not retreated at the top of their speed. They reached Bezzecca first, and there rallied, and the battle began.

For an hour and a half it continued, and when we came up, the Garibaldians had just been driven from the village, and were still contesting the advance of the Austrians. The latter were, however, pushing on, issuing in a very heavy line of skirmishers from the village, keeping up a tremendous fire of musketry, and throwing rockets and an occasional shell among the retreating Italians. The two guns of the Royal Artillery, which had accompanied the column, had taken up a post on some elevated ground, and were keeping up a steady fire upon the advancing Austrians.

Although the 5th had been reinforced by the other Garibaldian regiments, they were giving ground fast. Their officers could be seen well in front of them, doing their utmost to get them to make a stand.

It was evident that there were two very different classes of men among the Garibaldians : the one, and this was in a great minority, fought admirably, giving way foot by foot, clinging to every bit of cover, retiring with their faces to the foe, and keeping up a steady fire

The majority had no fight in them, they huddled together, parties broke off and ran to the rear, and were only brought back again by the exertions of their officers. Whenever a shell burst near them, or a rocket came in their way, there was a disposition to break up altogether. The two guns were splendidly fought, but they could not maintain their exposed position ; three of the horses were killed and several wounded. Many of the men had fallen, and at last they were forced to retire and take up a position further back. The withdrawal of the guns was evidently considered by the Garibaldians on the left to be the signal for retreat, and they turned and ran back some hundred yards in a body before they were checked and brought up again ; but as the Austrians continued to advance, it was evident that in another few minutes the whole force would give way, and in that case a terrible disaster would have occurred, for the road was narrow, and would quickly have been blocked.

Just at this moment, a gun boomed out behind us, another and another, and looking round, we saw that the battery of artillery we had passed on the road, had now arrived and come into action. Their practice was admirable ; the Austrians for a time continued to advance, but not for long. The Garibaldians picked up courage upon the arrival of their artillery, pressed forward again, and slowly, step by step, the Austrians fell back to the village, from which they kept up a fire that soon arrested the Italian advance. Presently a house at the end of the village caught fire from the explosion of the shells ; it spread almost immediately to four or five of the adjoining houses, and a mass of red flame, which even the bright glare of the sun could not obscure, shot up.

The houses in the Tyrolean villages are built almost entirely of wood, and their roofs, which are open at each end, are used as storage-places for hay, and had not the wind blown in the other direction, in less than half an hour the whole village would have been in ashes. For nearly an hour the fight continued in this way, the Garibaldians several times forming for the purpose of a rush at the village, but each time refusing to advance. At last a number of the most determined gathered themselves together, irrespective of regiments, and made a gallant charge forward. The rest followed, and the Austrian rear-guard—for we learned afterwards that the main body had retired an hour before —fell back at once.

There was no attempt at pursuit. For an hour or so, the guns kept up a fire at the next village, and then a party going forward, found that the Austrians had marched straight through to Riva, and so the battle of Bezzecca was at an end. We afterwards learnt that the Austrians had but little over 1500 men engaged, while the Garibaldians had 10,000 men at Triano, of which about 6000 were actually engaged. Their loss was about fifty killed and three hundred and fifty wounded. No doubt the Garibaldians would have done better in time, and would have learnt to stand fire. They suffered from two disadvantages: one being that they were almost all young troops, the other that their companies were two hundred and fifty strong, with only one or two officers, who were powerless to restore order when confusion once set in. As it was, they never had a chance of improving, for a few days later the news came that an armistice had been arranged between Prussia and Austria, and the fighting came to an end on the south side of the Alps as on the north.

I do not consider that the fact, that the Garibaldian Volunteers and the French Franc-Tireurs were almost worthless on the day of battle, detracts in any way from the value of our own volunteers. The latter are not a crowd of raw lads got together by a transient wave of enthusiasm, but men who have gone soberly and in a business-like sort of way to their work. The lads fresh from the militia fought at Waterloo as well as veterans, and I have a very strong opinion that in the day of battle, our volunteers would behave at least as well as the line. Indeed, they ought to do so, being drawn for the most part from a superior class, and having among them a considerable admixture of gentlemen. However, I do not suppose that any of us are likely ever to see that question solved by actual experiment.

That was the last of their stories that I heard, though I have no doubt they kept on just the same during the remaining three days they stopped in the house; but I could not stand any more of it. I announced myself that evening as able to get to a room upstairs with my servant's help, and once in bed, I stopped there till they were safely out of the house. When I found that they had gone, I came down, and thought that I was going to have Lucy all to myself again just as before, and I had quite made up my mind that before I went, I should get that question settled between her and me. But somehow or other, things didn't go as I had expected. Instead of praising me for the way I had borne with those three bores, Lucy chose to consider it as a personal grievance when I expressed my opinion freely about them, and even went so far as to say that it would be a good thing when I could get well enough to go out to the stables, for that I should feel more at home among horses and dogs than with intelligent beings.

I did begin once, the last day I spent there, but she took me up at once. "That's all nonsense, Jack; we are very good friends, and I hope we shall always remain so; but I have not the least idea in the world of marrying you. Your ideas and mine differ as widely as the poles, and one does want some sort of similarity in tastes in a husband." That was what she said, and what was worse, she said it as if she meant it, and I do believe, upon my honour, that it was all because I could not see any point in those prosy stories told in Sir John's study. She told me after they had gone, that the three fellows were war correspondents. I always hated writing fellows, and I shall hate them worse in future. If ever I get to be a General, and command an expedition, you will see I shall make short work of any of those correspondent fellows who hang about an army. I don't hold much with "our only General;" but I am with him down to the ground in regard to them.

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